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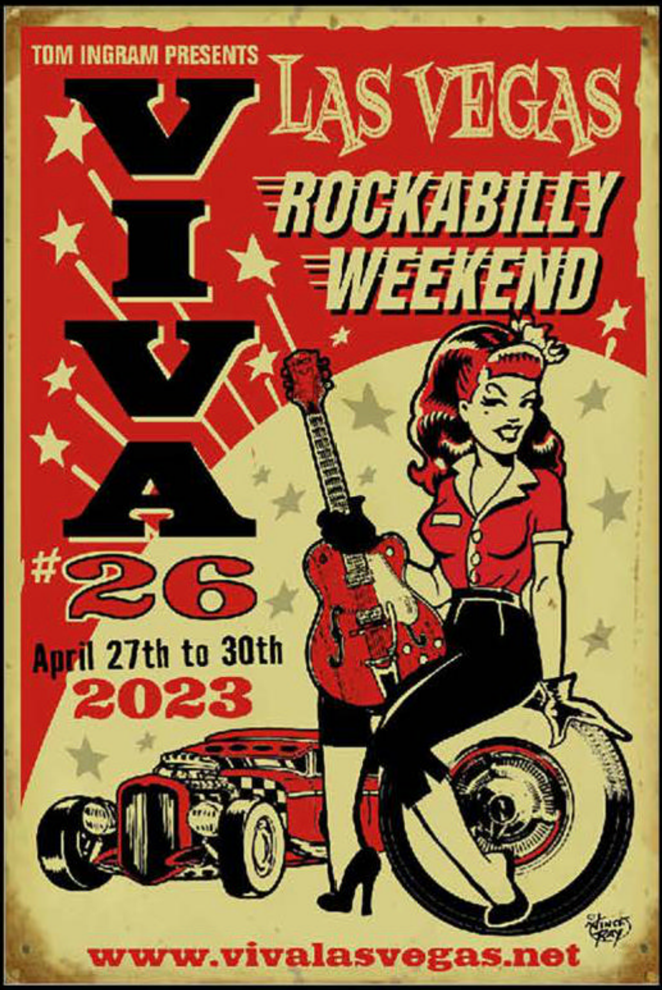

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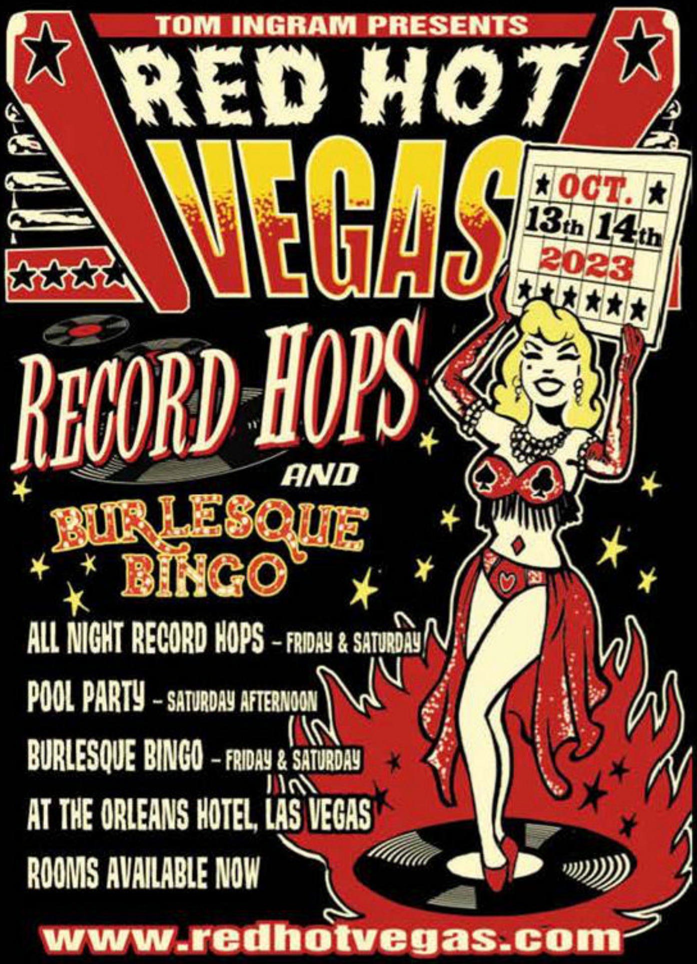

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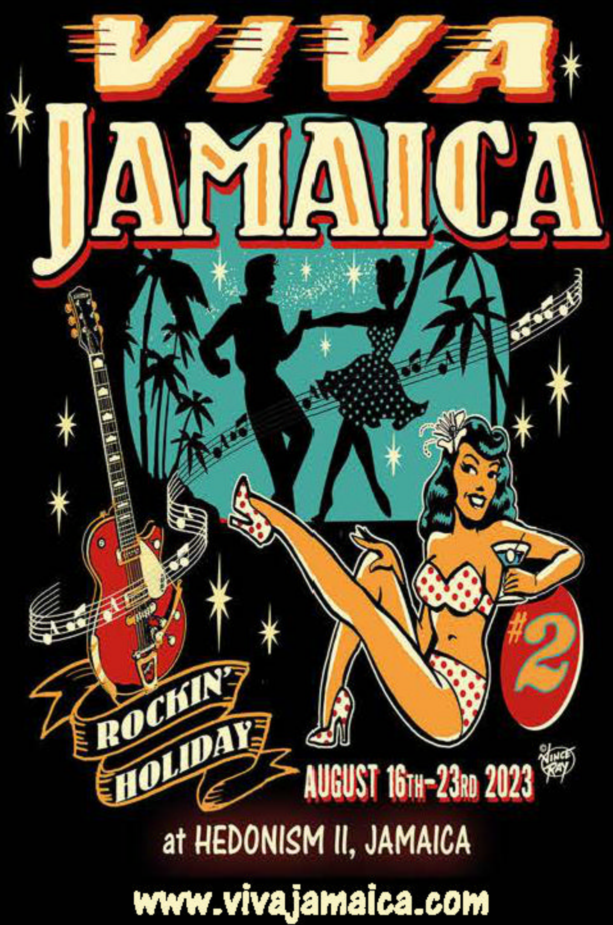

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London Road, Bath, BA1 6PL
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www.facebook.com/vintagerockmag
www.twitter.com/VintageRockMag
www.instagram.com/vintagerockmag

EDITOR Steve Harnell
steve.harnell@anthem.co.uk

ART EDITOR Debra Butler
debra.butler@anthem.co.uk

PRODUCTION EDITOR Rik Flynn

ADVERTISING
ADVERTISING MANAGER Leah Fitz-Henry
leah.fitz-henry@anthem.co.uk

ANTHEM PUBLISHING
CHIEF EXECUTIVE Jon Bickley
jon.bickley@anthem.co.uk

MANAGING DIRECTOR Simon Lewis
simon.lewis@anthem.co.uk

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Jenny Cook
jenny.cook@anthem.co.uk

MARKETING EXECUTIVE Rosie Pankhurst
rosie.pankhurst@anthem.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS
Dan Biggane, Craig Brackenridge, Julie Burns,
Graham Fenton, Steve O'Brien, Jack Watkins,
David West and Chris Wheatley

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LICENSING
Regina Erak
+44 (0) 7753 811 622
regina.erak@googlemail.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES
PLEASE CONTACT:
0844 856 0642* (UK)
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email: shop@vintagerockmag.com
web: anthem-publishing.com/vintage
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WELCOME...

VINTAGE★ROCK
2023 THE YEAR AHEAD
Billy Fury
40 YEARS ON
THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF A ROCK'N'ROLL TRAILBLAZER
JACK RABBIT SLIM

What a remarkable talent the rockin' world lost when Billy Fury left us at the age of just 42 in January 1983. Blessed with good looks, charisma to burn and a voice equally at home on up-tempo numbers and ballads, Fury was a singular performer and well deserving of his place at the top table of first-wave UK rock'n'rollers.

It's now become abundantly clear that his reputation has only grown across the course of the four decades since his passing and I can think of no finer homegrown artist to grace our cover. With that in mind, we've rounded up some of Billy's contemporaries and biggest fans to pay special tribute to an incredible man. As Marty Wilde tells us: "Billy was right up there with the very best." Matchbox's Graham Fenton agrees, too, saying: "When Billy came along we really had someone who could rival Elvis Presley or Eddie Cochran."

I'm also delighted that we can find space for another of my personal favourite vintage British artists this issue, Johnny Kidd. Wonderfully unique, Kidd broke new ground with his theatrical performance style and the likes of *Shakin' All Over* and *Please Don't Touch* remain seminal seven-inch releases.

Elsewhere, we gaze into our crystal ball to check out what's on the rockin' horizon for 2023 in *VR*'s annual 'Year Ahead' feature. Now that the music industry has bounced back after the pandemic, there's a wealth of superb live events, new albums and reissues to look forward to over the course of the next 12 months.

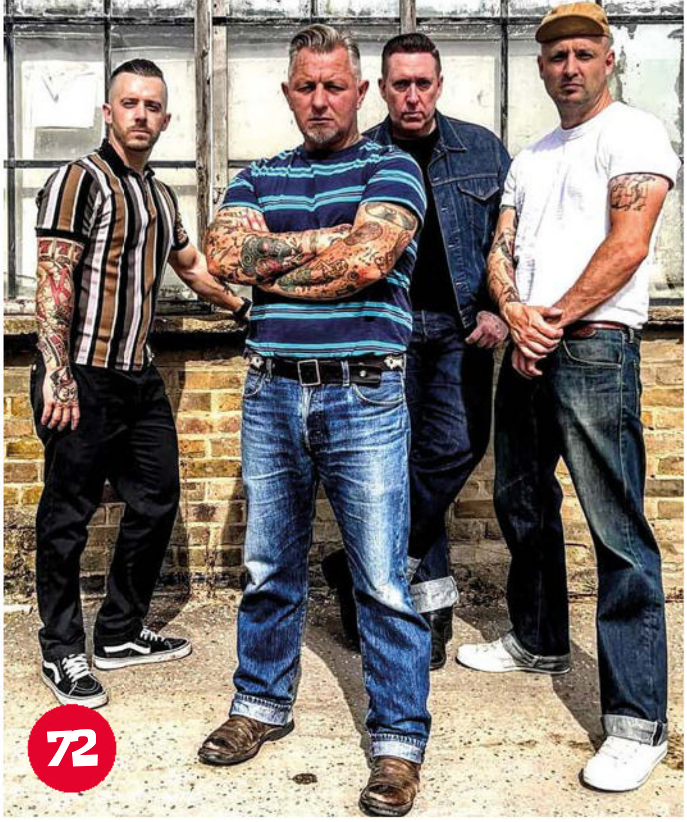
We're positively overflowing with must-read interviews, too, not least the hugely influential 'Queen of Bass' herself, Carol Kaye, plus we can exclusively announce Jack Rabbit Slim's comeback plans as frontman Bob Butfoy reveals how he's battled back from his recent health problems.

Enjoy the issue!

Steve

Steve Harnell
Editor

Follow me on Twitter @steve_harnell



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2023
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ROCKIN' RACE Jamboree
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The Blue Cats
Screaming Lord Sutch
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ALL Mama's CHILDREN

OBITUARY

CHARLIE GRACIE

(14 MAY 1936-16 DECEMBER 2022)

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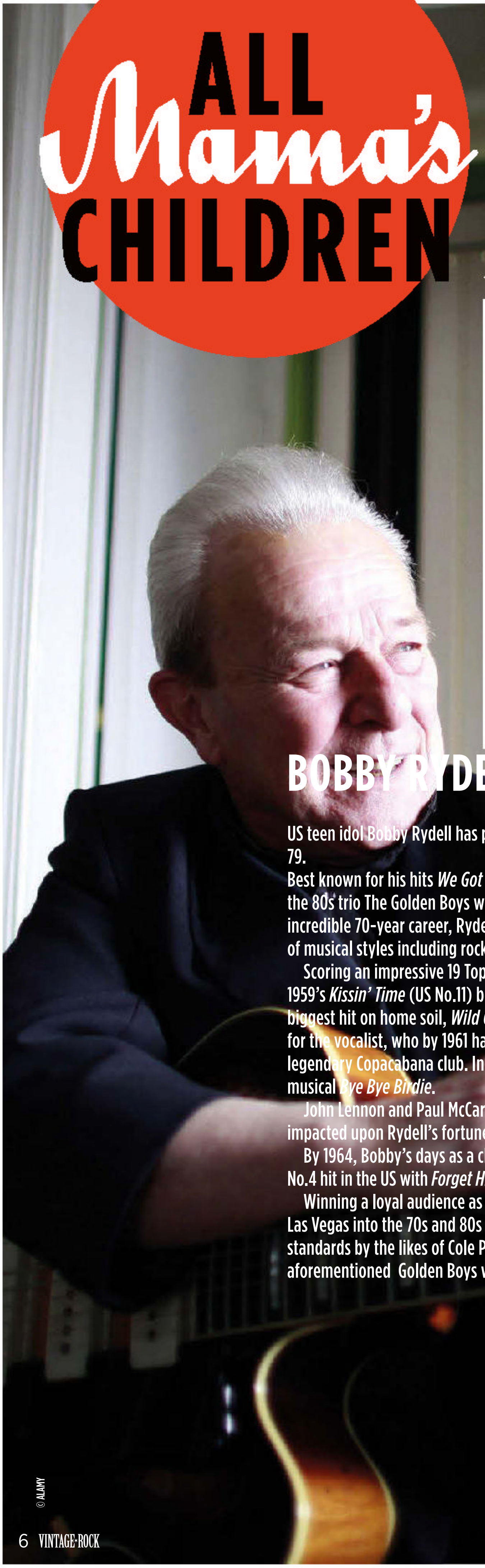
Rock'n'roll pioneer, the singer and guitarist Charlie Gracie, has died aged 86.

Gracie's son Charlie Jnr confirmed that the influential *Vintage Rock* regular passed away from Covid-related complications after contracting the virus while performing shows at Wilkes-Barre and Long Island in April 2022.

Gracie was among the first wave of rock'n'rollers to find international success when he scored the million-selling No.1 hit *Butterfly*, in the spring of 1957. Gracie Snr told *Vintage Rock* back in 2021: "My mother was a big country fan, so I used to listen to Hank Williams, Hank Snow, Eddy Arnold. My father liked swing, Tommy Dorsey and the big bands, so my head was full of those arrangements. Then I would listen to the Black radio stations, rhythm and blues. You put the three of them together and that's how rock'n'roll became rock'n'roll. I was playing it before they coined the phrase 'rock'n'roll' – and I was happy to be a small part of it."

Gracie's big break came via a talent contest run by Paul Whiteman that was broadcast simultaneously on radio and television in Philadelphia, Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Charlie recalled: "Whiteman was a famous orchestra leader in the 30s and 40s. I sang Bill Haley's *Rock The Joint* and won five weeks running." Gracie's final appearance was heard by Graham Prince, owner of the New York-based Cadillac Records who offered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BOBBY RYDELL (1942-2022)

US teen idol Bobby Rydell has passed away from complications related to pneumonia, aged 79.

Best known for his hits *We Got Love*, *Volare* and *Wild One*, Bobby wo[illegible] the 80s trio The Golden Boys with fellow teen idols Fabian Forte and Frankie Avalon. Over an incredible 70-year career, Rydell worked across a diverse range of musical styles including rock'n'roll, Italian pop, Broadway standards and even disco.

Scoring an impressive 19 Top 40 hits on the Billboard chart, Rydell first charted with 1959's *Kissin' Time* (US No.11) before selling one million copies of *We Got Love* (US No.6). His biggest hit on home soil, *Wild One* (US No.2), formed part of a string of best-selling singles for the vocalist, who by 1961 had become the youngest performer to headline New York's legendary Copacabana club. In 1963, he also starred in the movie adaptation of Broadway musical *Bye Bye Birdie*.

John Lennon and Paul McCartney were fans, although The Beatles' success directly impacted upon Rydell's fortunes as a clean-cut teen idol.

By 1964, Bobby's days as a chart star were on the wane, although he still scored a sizeable No.4 hit in the US with *Forget Him*, his last major chart success.

Winning a loyal audience as a live act meant that Rydell was still able to sell out shows in Las Vegas into the 70s and 80s where he performed the great American songbook, featuring standards by the likes of Cole Porter and George Gershwin. Rydell's latter-day tenure in the aforementioned Golden Boys was a huge success, stretching from 1985 to 2021.

the young performer a record contract the following day.

Gracie's first release was the self-penned *Boogie Woogie Blues* (as Charlie Graci), on which he was joined by a number of top-class musicians, including jazz pianist Luther Henderson and double-bass player Bobby Haggart, best known for his 1938 instrumental hit, *Big Noise From Winnetka*. *Boogie Woogie Blues* wasn't a hit, but it did give Gracie a taste of the big time when he performed it on the Philly-based TV show *American Bandstand* as a 15-year-old.

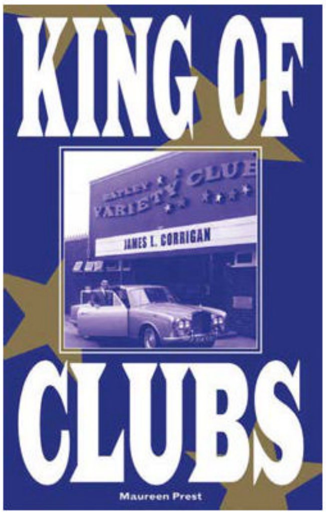
Gracie's life changed overnight, though, with the No.1 success of the pop-slanted *Butterfly* single penned by Bernie Lowe and the co-founder of Gracie's Cameo label, Kal Mann. However, in a deal typical of the time, the writing credit on the single went to 'Anthony September', a pseudonym of Tony Mammarella, the producer of *American Bandstand*, which ensured that the 7" received maximum exposure.

Gracie also made an appearance in the iconic 1957 film *Jamboree*, singing *Cool Baby*, alongside performances by a roster of greats including Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Fats Domino and Frankie Avalon. The same year, he released the follow-up hit *Fabulous*, which reached No.16 in the United States and No.6 in the UK.

Gracie's overseas sales led him to become only the second American rock'n'roller, after Bill Haley, to tour the UK, including prestigious appearances at the Hippodrome in London and the London Palladium. His hits continued in the UK with *I Love You So Much It Hurts*, *Wanderin' Eyes* and *Cool Baby*.

A legal dispute with his label saw Gracie's fortunes as a recording artist take a dip, but the late 70s found him resurrect his career as a performer, particularly in Europe where he was a popular draw on the rock'n'roll gigging and festival circuit.

Paul McCartney, who as a 15-year-old saw Gracie perform in the UK and included a cover of *Fabulous* on his 1999 *Run Devil Run* album, said on Twitter: "Sad to hear of the death of Charlie Gracie – an early rock'n'roll pioneer who influenced our formative years. Love to his family. Thanks Charlie, you were fabulous!"



BOOK REVIEW

King Of Clubs
by Maureen Prest

★★★★

You'd be forgiven for thinking that a book chronicling the legendary Batley Variety Club would focus on the impressive conveyor belt of A-list talent that it attracted to the 'Las Vegas of the North' throughout the 60s and 70s. In fact, the real juice here is the astonishing life story of its owner James Corrigan.

Penned by insider and Batley PR supremo Maureen Prest, *King Of Clubs* is a fascinating rags to riches (and back again) tale with a remarkable final twist straight out of the pages of a Hollywood script. Born into a travelling showman family, Corrigan struck out on his own via a string of bingo halls and cinemas. But it was a lightbulb moment in spotting a gap in the live music market up North – and building a no-expense-spared cabaret venue on a disused sewage site in Batley, West Yorkshire, no less – that was to be his masterstroke.

Corrigan and his wife Betty broke the mould, often hosting Batley's headline artists at their own home to provide a bespoke family feel that saw them strike up lifelong friendships with the talent. But the couple's tempestuous relationship behind the scenes would ultimately also be part of their own ultimate undoing. Tales of appearances by the likes of Louis Armstrong, Shirley Bassey and Neil Sedaka provide the star power but *King Of Clubs*' trump card is the way that Prest delves into the human story of the Corrigans. **Steve Harnell**

EVENTS

*All listings subject to Covid restrictions and cancellations

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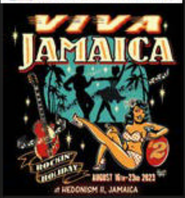

ELVIS BINGO

That'll Be The Day
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LOCATIONS Various across the UK
BOOKING WEBSITE thatllbetheday.com

Rockin' Race Jamboree 29
2-5 February
FEATURING The Delta Bombers, Deke Dickerson, Marcel Riesco
LOCATION Auditorium Principe De Asturias, Torremolinos, Costa Del Sol
BOOKING WEBSITE rockinrace.com

Hemsby #66
9-13 March
FEATURING Gizzelle, Jack Baymoore & The Bandits, Jimmy Dale Richardson, Jacob Tolliver
LOCATION Hemsby Beach Holiday Park, Norfolk
BOOKING WEBSITE hemsbyrocknroll.co.uk

40th Anniversary Billy Fury Tribute Weekend
24-26 March
FEATURING Colin Paul & The Persuaders, Rock Back The Clock, Rockin' The Joint
LOCATION Savoy Hotel, Queens Promenade, Blackpool
BOOKING WEBSITE colinpaulandthepersuaders.com

The Kings of Rock'n'Roll
21-24 April
FEATURING The Jets, Harry & The Hounds, Bo Walton & Red Alert, The Kingcats, The Jive Romeros
LOCATION Sand Bay Holiday Park, Kewstoke, North Somerset
BOOKING WEBSITE rockin50s.co.uk

Viva Las Vegas
27-30 April
FEATURING TBA on VLV website
LOCATION 4500 W Tropicana Avenue, Las Vegas
BOOKING WEBSITE vivalasvegas.net

Wildest Cats In Town Summer Party Reunion
30 June-3 July
FEATURING Bobby Grafford, Rip Masters, Jake Calypso, The Cosh Boys, Steve Riot
LOCATION Pontins Pakefield, Lowestoft
BOOKING WEBSITE tennesseeclub.net

Viva Jamaica
16-23 August
FEATURING Jittery Jack, Little Rachel, Angela Tini, The Shook Boys
LOCATION Hedonism II, Jamaica
BOOKING WEBSITE vivajamaica.com

Great Yarmouth Elvis Festival
8-15 September
FEATURING Donna Presley, Linda Gail Lewis, The Class of '58
LOCATION Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk
BOOKING WEBSITE elvisfestivaluk.com/

Sleazy RECORDS PRESENTS:

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2023 2-3-4-5 FEBRUARY

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Sleazy Records PRESENTS:
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2023
2-3-4-5
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AMERIPOLITAN MUSIC AWARDS
WINNER BEST FESTIVAL 2019
29TH EDITION

ROCKIN' RACE JAMBOREE
A VETERAN AND DISTINGUISHED ANDALUSIAN DESTINATION!!

Music is at the heart of Andalucía's identity. Known for its flamenco, the Spanish region also offers assorted concert and festival lineups that have made it a hugely attractive destination for music lovers of all genres and styles. Among the many events that take place each year across the Andalusian landscape, the veteran Rockin' Race Jamboree stands out – it's a call of international nature dedicated body and soul to rescue and spread the word for North American roots music: the seed of rock'n'roll from the 50s and 60s.

Torremolinos, located at the heart of the Costa del Sol in Málaga, hosts this annual event from 2-5 February 2023. Staged for the 29th time this year, its lineup is packed with high-quality artists including The Delta Bombers and the legendary Planet Rockers. During its three-decade history, the Rockin' Race Jamboree has served as a spotlight for a large number of national and international visitors who are attracted by the opportunity to enjoy live music and also get to know Andalucía's cultural, historical and gastronomic wealth.

Developed as a multidisciplinary event for retro American music and culture lovers, apart from its concert programme at the Auditorium Príncipe de Asturias, the Rockin' Race also hosts activities including classic car exhibitions, collectors' items, vintage fashion and flea markets. Furthermore, the outdoor shows in Torremolinos' streets and squares represent a opportunity for visitors to enjoy Andalucía's popular hospitality at first hand.

Renowned as one of the most important European music events, the Rockin' Race Jamboree is an international role model that won the title of Best Music Festival in 2019 from the Ameripolitan Music Awards – the most important global rock'n'roll awards. Thousands of festivalgoers attend the event each year, therefore contributing to Andalucía being regarded as one of the top two Spanish regions in festival organisation.

Andalucía is music, and events such as the Rockin' Race Jamboree are the perfect opportunity for tourists to enjoy the varied and exquisite culture on offer in the region.

Rockin' Race Jamboree festival allows you to delve into an original rock'n'roll experience and at the same time, enjoy the millennial cultural wealth of Andalucía: a land of music and an important cultural destination with the patronage of the Consejería de Turismo, Cultura y Deporte of the Junta de Andalucía and joint financing of the European Union.

TORREMOLINOS

MALAGA (SPAIN) COSTA DEL SOL

Andalucía

Funded by the European Union

Junta de Andalucía

Harry And The Hounds

Frontman Harry Caiger reveals all about his blues and rockabilly influences, plus how the rockin' scene has bounced back post-Covid

WORDS BY **CRAIG BRACKENRIDGE**

West Sussex trio Harry And The Hounds have only been in action since 2018 but are already winning fans over with their rich blend of bluesy rockabilly. Sticking to their plan to play to as wide an audience as possible, they recently supported Missouri rockers The Hooten Hallers and took the trip to South London for a spot at the Psychobilly Freakout. Their 2020 debut album *Release The Hounds*, on Foot Tapping Records, established them as one to watch and across two download singles in 2022, *Hey Jack!* and *Easy Street*, they have remained resolutely rockin' but also illustrated a real progression in their music. With their arrival on vinyl pencilled in for 2023 with a new line-up and more live work on the cards, we spoke to frontman Harry Caiger about what it takes for a young band to get established these days and their plans for this year and beyond.

Ain't nothing but the Hound Dogs: Harry and band

> "Having variation is the key. Nobody wants a one-trick pony – we aren't a purist band in any shape or form"

HARRY AND THE HOUNDS
RELEASE THE HOUNDS

©YERCH ABDO

How do your earliest shows compare with the type of bookings that you're getting now?
When we first set out doing this we were playing in any local pub that would have us. I was vaguely familiar with the UK rock'n'roll scene but didn't have any connections to it. Once we had an album to put out we managed to get ourselves in with various different clubs and promoters in the scene, but we still do the occasional pub gig here and there! It keeps us on our toes playing to a different crowd. These days we find ourselves taking almost anything that comes in, whether that be a club, festival, pub or support slot for another band.

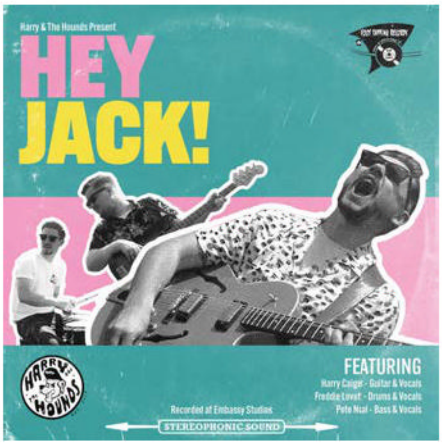
Have there been any line-up changes along the way?
Since starting the band, the only change to the line-up has been our bass player. Our original bassist, Pete Neal, parted ways with us early last year to pursue other things. His place has been taken by Nathan Clark. Nath came into the fold last July just to fill in on a few dates and has since taken the reins full time. He's a fantastic player and, along with our drummer Freddie Lovett, we can't wait to get into the studio with him early this year.

What was your personal route into rock'n'roll?
Growing up, music was always a part of my life from an early age. My dad and uncle both played guitar so that inevitably started me on my journey towards something musical. Even as a child, though, I had a real passion for any music that had a swing to it and a walking bassline. There was a lot of blues in my dad's record collection when I was a kid and that started me on the path towards where I am now, but when I was 15 my mum had a copy of a Stray Cats compilation CD that just changed everything for me.

There is a rich seam of rockin' blues through many of your tracks. Was it always your plan to lean into this style of music or did it just come naturally?
I guess that wasn't really intentional but being a real fan of the blues and everything that has come from it, I think these things just seem to seep through the cracks naturally. There are some songs that I write that are just straight-up blues numbers because why the hell not? I've always been a huge fan of Stevie Ray Vaughan – he was my first love when it came to the blues. I'm

Sunglasses After Dark: Harry And The Hounds will play Hemsby in 2023

really into a lot of bands like The Fabulous Thunderbirds, The Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Canned Heat and Johnny Winter, as well as classic artists like Little Walter, Elmore James and Muddy Waters.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Freddie Lovett - Drums & Vocals
Pete Neal - Bass & Vocals

How did your connection with Foot Tapping Records happen and did your 2020 debut album *Release The Hounds* come together quite easily?
Purely by knocking on doors. I used to (and still do) spend a lot of time sending out emails and trying to get in contact with various people within the scene to make gains with the band. I originally contacted the guys at Rhythm Bomb Records with some demos that we had but due to Brexit they weren't taking on any UK artists. However, they then put me in contact with Clive Duffin of Foot Tapping. He wasn't a fan of what we sent him so he asked if we had any videos of us performing. After sending him the only video we had, he kindly invited us down to Embassy Studios to lay down a couple of tracks. We recorded Johnny Burnette's *Sweet Love On My Mind* and our original track, *Howlin'* on that day. Safe to say, Clive was impressed and we continued recording the rest of the album with what material we had at the time plus a few of our favourite cover versions.

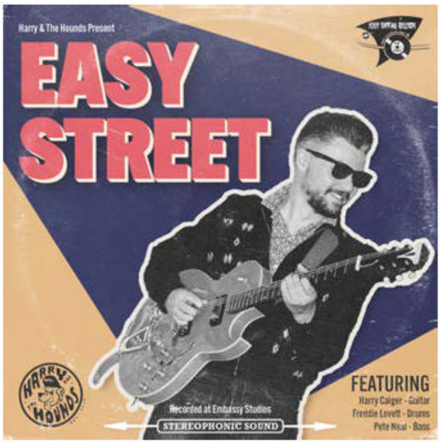
Was that representative of your live set back then and would you say your songwriting has progressed since?
Absolutely! We essentially recorded the best of what we were playing at the time. *Forever 17* and *Workin' Man's Blues* were the only tracks that were written specifically for the album to bring us up to 10 songs. I've always been an advocate for writing original material, especially for a band in this scene. There's only so many times the crowd can hear the same old songs. Since the first album, I've definitely been leaning more into my influence of Brian Setzer and incorporating elements of jazz and country, which can both be heard on our latest single *Easy Street*. Having variation is key. Nobody wants to be a one-trick pony...

Is Spotify a useful platform to showcase your music or do you feel it's almost 'expected' for bands to have a presence on there now?
Spotify is a really tricky one. Because of the scene we find ourselves in, a lot of folk tend to buy physical CDs, which from a certain outlook is brilliant as that keeps us in pocket and keeps this band going. However, when trying to cast a wider net, promoters, labels and the music industry at large aren't necessarily interested in your music if it's not got a certain amount of monthly listeners.

Your sound no doubt appeals to a wider audience. Do you actively look for gigs beyond the usual circuit?
As we're an outfit without any management, I tend to book all of the band's shows and am always on the lookout for gigs away from the rockin' scene. We aren't a purist band in any shape or form and sometimes what we play, some audiences within the scene don't like what we do, especially when it comes to us having electric bass over the traditional upright. We've recently played some shows this year outside of the rock'n'roll circuit and these have been some of the most fun – you find yourself really letting loose.

Will 2023 see another healthy bout of live action for the band?
At the minute, the calendar is still taking shape for this year. However, one in particular that we are looking forward to is Don't Knock The Rock in Hemsby in March. From what I've observed, for the most part, live music has made a real comeback since the end of lockdown. I remember before Covid it was definitely a struggle to get folks to come to gigs, whereas now there's a real lust for it.

What are your plans for a new album and do you think it will be fairly different from your debut?
Recording for album number two started this month and we couldn't be more excited. It's been three years since we laid down the tracks for *Release The Hounds*. I think it's going to be an extension of what we've done in the past but there will be something for everyone on there. There will be rockabilly, some more blues and we might even try our hand at a doo-wop number! ✶



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ADVERTISING FEATURE

Trevor Payne

The *That'll Be The Day* director, producer and star takes us behind the long-running stage show success story

Tell us more about the genesis of *That'll Be The Day*.
That'll Be The Day played its first show in 1986. Previously, I was in an act called Fizzical along with three girls – we'd worked in the UK as well as in the Far East, Middle East and Europe – and combined music, dance and comedy. Fizzical were invited to join a rock'n'roll production promoted by Bristol-based agent John Mills in 1984. The show consisted of The Rock And Roll Circus, a very tight five-piece group from South Wales, a duo – Margo and Trevor – from Ireland, and a comedian, Fred the Ted. Basically, everyone did their own act and joined together to open and close each half of the show. It always went down well with club audiences wherever it played. I took on the role of director and over the course of a couple of years, changed the show into an integrated production using all the experience gained in Fizzical. The format was born.

How has it evolved over the years?
That'll Be The Day has never stopped evolving. Performers and musicians came and went. Some stayed for years, others didn't buy into the formula and did one tour. I don't know of another show that changes its content year-on-year but the incentive is always to make the new production better than the outgoing one. That's a great challenge but it keeps the cast on their toes.

What can people expect from the current incarnation?
We've just finished the Christmas show which is, again, refreshed every year and was a huge success. Now it's back to the regular show until August when the process of regeneration begins again. This year's edition starts, as it must, with a look back to some of the original rock'n'roll greats.

Fizzically fit: Trevor appeared as Sir Cliff on the *Max & Paddy's Road To Nowhere* TV show and joined Peter Kay again for charity single *Amarillo*

> **"We'll carry on bringing some light relief – *That'll Be The Day* should be on the National Health!"**

We move on to the coffee bar and jukebox days of the early 60s – Brenda Lee, Bruce Channel, Sam Cooke, The Ronettes, Neil Sedaka and Clarence 'Frogman' Henry are all featured. We then drop in to a *Sunday Night At The London Palladium* section to see Cliff and, of course, The Shadows as well as Tina Turner, Gene Pitney and The Beatles. Then it's on to the birth of Radio 1 and an eclectic medley of that wonderful time in British pop, all interspersed with comic gems. That's just the first half...

How do you choose the setlist?
The setlist for each new version is put together over months leading up to rehearsals. Nostalgia value is so important, so is the pace and balance of the performers' time on stage. Over the years it's gradually become slicker and I keep my finger on the pulse.

We hear that *TBTD* has some fans who've seen over 300 shows...
We have many thousands of fans, some have been on the journey from the beginning – fantastically loyal, they want to see the latest incarnation. Then there are the 'superfans' who have seen hundreds of shows. I can name the first two rows at many of the theatres we play at. We have a handful who've seen more than 1,000 performances. We have fans who live abroad and book their UK visit to coincide with our schedule. For some, it's the only show they'll venture out for. We appreciate them and are humbled.

You were used to playing 200+ shows a year. How have you found the audiences post-pandemic?
The pandemic – wow – a world changer. We had an 18-month break, which I used to write my book, *Last Man Standing*. The pandemic seemed interminable and has proved to have long-term implications for theatres, artists and techies, but we all survived. The show goes on unlike so many people who've suffered. We'll carry on bringing some light relief to our customers and, as we are often told, *That'll Be The Day* should be on the National Health! For many, the show is their social life and an unashamedly nostalgic laugh-out-loud evening out where they can forget their problems for three hours. ✶

For further details about the show, visit the website at: thatllbetheday.com

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BABY THIS IS Rock 'n' Roll

Graham starts new chapters with The Hellraisers and Matchbox – and lives to tell the tale after crawling from the wreck of a bus crash in Holland

In the spring of 1973 our newly-formed band The Hellraisers were starting to make progress. We hooked up with a booking agency and there were already a number of venues who knew about us and were keen for the band to perform for them. The band comprised myself, guitarist Terry Clemson, sax player Tommy Husky, Bob O'Connor – who was the ex-drummer of the original Wild Angels band – and bassist Greg Hamilton, formerly from The Nashville Teens.

Rehearsals went well and we quickly got a solid setlist together. Our reputation spread across the UK and soon interest from other countries started to happen, too, especially in Holland where we'd had an audition with a selection of other bands. One promoter in particular from The Hague really took a shine to us and put the band up in our own apartment, which we used as a base as we travelled across the country to various towns. We could cook our own food there and hang out. It was also in Holland that we saw a McDonald's for the first time before any arrived in the UK. Revolutionary back then, but oh so commonplace now.

THE HOUSESHAKERS
Demolition Rock

We spent a lot of time in Holland and became popular there. During our time as The Hellraisers we recorded a couple of albums, one was called *Remember When* on a small label called Contour Records – the same company with whom we recorded *Demolition Rock* with The Houseshakers.

We had a newer van, of course, which was a bit more comfortable and bigger than the old Houseshakers one, as we travelled the length of breadth of the UK. We would be in Scotland and Wales then travel down to the West Country – we covered quite a few miles round Britain alone!

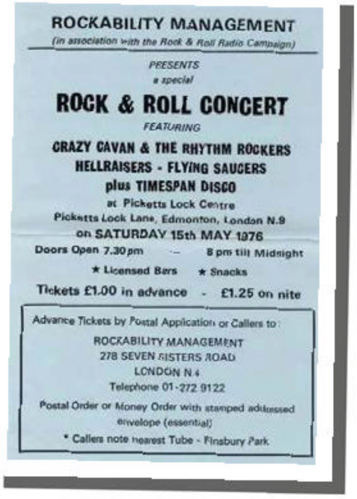
The Hellraisers in 1973 – Graham would front the band for a further three years before eventually joining Matchbox

In 1974 and 1975 onwards a selection of the current rock'n'roll bands like ourselves, Crazy Cavan and the Rhythm Rockers, Rock Island Line, The Riot Rockers, among others, were asked to do a month's residency in Copenhagen at their Hard Rock Café. Our first spell playing there was during the summer. We spent our days on the beach and each night performed shows of between 45 minutes and one hour from 10pm to 3am, with just short breaks for snacks and beer. They were long nights and the dawn had often broken by the time we'd get back to our hotel. The summer was good but a year later we went back on New Year's Eve 1974 with Crazy Cavan and the Rhythm Rockers, and Matchbox – before I joined them in 1977.

A later residency during a Scandinavian winter was much more difficult with heavy snow and ice. It was too damn cold to go out much in the daytime. It was a popular circuit over there and a handful of British bands such as Paper Lace and Dr Feelgood were also doing the rounds at the time.

In those days, as part of my act, I used to climb onto the PA speakers and then jump down – I must have had a lot of energy back then! One time, though, I actually went right through the stage which was about six feet off the ground. I grazed my legs and elbows as I disappeared right through it. Sheepishly, I returned to the stage to find the band playing on obliviously – and the audience thought it was all part of the show! To add insult to injury, the next day when the bosses fixed the hole they charged us for it.

In 1976, the Hellraisers went through another personnel change as Tommy wanted to leave. We auditioned other sax players but ended up with a pianist instead called Dave Taylor. That said, the arrangement worked out pretty well, although Dave's piano changed the band's sound so we had to amend our setlist to reflect that.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The gig that started the campaign to get rock'n'roll on the BBC

Late that year, the rockin' crowd campaigned to get more rock'n'roll played on mainstream radio stations such as the BBC. A whole bunch of us, along with Geoff Barker, Stuart Colman and The Wild Wax Show with

Roy Williams and co, took a petition with thousands of signatures to the BBC. We even put on a big event to tie in with it that featured three live bands – The Hellraisers, Crazy Cavan, and The Flying Saucers – which was held at the Picketts Lock Centre in Edmonton, North London.

The Flying Saucers had a flatbed truck which they used to stage a live show en route to Picketts Lock, while The Hellraisers and Crazy Cavan and the Rhythm Rockers played on the evening show afterwards. It was a great day, and one to remember for rockin' fans as everyone pulled out all the stops. As part of our act, The Hellraisers had a cheap old piano which we proceeded to break up on stage, throwing out pieces into the crowd as souvenirs.

The whole event was a resounding success and the petition had the desired effect – each Saturday evening at 5pm the BBC broadcast the *It's Rock And Roll* radio show, hosted by Stuart Colman and Geoff Barker. It was a great show and ran for many years. Bands on the scene would regularly drop in to play live sessions and give a plug for upcoming shows and tours.

As 1976 drew to a close I was getting itchy feet and needed a change from The Hellraisers – some new songs, and a different line-up I guess. I was just getting rather bored with our sound and some of the attitudes of the band members. I stayed with them until the end of the year, though, but stuck to my guns. The rest of the band weren't happy about me leaving but I'd made up my mind. My last gig with the guys was on Christmas Eve in 1976 – I made it clear I was going to leave in the new year.

Unbeknownst to me, Matchbox were having troubles, too, and wanted to get rid of their lead singer. Soon, I got word that they wanted me to join. At first I was rather uncertain. I didn't know them that well and was concerned about rocking the boat.

Apparently, their old singer was causing unrest in the band. My reluctance to sign up was partly that I didn't really want to join a new band outright, I just wanted to freshen up the line-up of my present one. With Matchbox, it helped that I did like some of the members both musically as well as personally. Their lead guitarist Steve Bloomfield was a great musician and songwriter, and I soon found plenty of evidence for the latter when I finally hooked up with the band at the beginning of 1977.

When I eventually joined Matchbox it was a new era for both me and the band. We spent many weeks rehearsing and there was also the thorny topic of the change of personnel. Their frontman wasn't happy about leaving the band, which caused a bit of upset but c'est la vie.

“I WENT RIGHT THROUGH THE STAGE WHICH WAS SIX FEET DEEP – THE AUDIENCE THOUGHT IT WAS PART OF THE SHOW!”

In the early part of '77 I had some gigs of my own to play in England before joining with Matchbox for a six-week trip to Holland, where we were based in Eindhoven. We played a mixture of bars and venues in the week, followed by larger rock'n'roll festivals at the weekends.

At one festival in Lokkum, which was attended by some 30,000 fans, we got word that Chuck Berry's backing band, The Flying Saucers, hadn't shown up. Our Dutch manager wasn't there either so it was left up to me to go to the festival office and offer our services. I told them that I'd already backed up Chuck once before – it was in my days with The Houseshakers but I didn't tell them that – and we arranged a fee to help Chuck out. It was a nice little earner you might say! Chuck was in fine spirits although as usual he didn't rehearse much, he just gave us a few signs about what he wanted as well as his setlist. He must have been in a good mood – he even signed a few autographs!

REMEMBER WHEN?
GREAT HITS
REVIVED BY
THE HELLRAISERS
OH! CAROL · PEGGY SUE
LET'S TWIST AGAIN · BE-BOP-A-LULA
WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE
DIANA · SINGING THE BLUES
SHAKIN' ALL OVER · A TEENAGER IN LOVE
BE MY BABY · SUMMERTIME BLUES · THE WANDERER

Graham backed up a unusually well-humoured Chuck Berry for a second show, this time with Matchbox

Our own 30-minute set went down extremely well and when it was our turn to back Chuck he clearly enjoyed the experience, even giving Steve Bloomfield a few solos, which was not the norm. The Flying Saucers eventually turned up while we were playing, but by then they'd missed their chance.

We knew the band well, though, and they invited us to go back to the hotel where they were staying with Chuck for something to eat and drink. But we very nearly didn't make it back to the hotel at all. En route, the driver of the bus we were in pulled out into traffic on the wrong side of the road without looking. Suddenly, another car tore through the side of our bus. I ended up with 10 stitches in the back of my head and The Flying Saucers' bassist, Pete Pritchard, had stitches in his leg. We're good friends now and always joke about being blood brothers owing to all the 'claret' in the back of the ambulance. It was a very lucky escape. The car that smashed through the side of the bus contained a family that included some small children. It shook them up, but thankfully they all escaped unharmed.

The police and ambulance crew cleared up the mess, Pete and I were treated in hospital, and then we were both put in a taxi and taken back to the hotel. Apart from a sore head and Pete's leg, we managed to get through the rest of the tour, although for several months the pair of us were being asked about a medical bill that ran to a rather large sum of money – luckily we lived to tell the tale. ✶

Bright sparks: Graham poses with new band Matchbox

© RICHARD McCAFFREY/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES/GRAHAM FENTON

Georgina Peach And The Savoys

When they abruptly found themselves without a vocalist, Dutch R&B rockers The Savoys hit the jackpot after discovering a waitress who can sing like Etta James and Aretha Franklin

WORDS BY **DAVID WEST**

Dutch courage: Cheri Addo went pro immediately

Guitarist CC Jerome and saxophonist Mikkel van der Meulen were in a tight spot. Their band, The Savoys, had recorded an album for El Toro Records, they had shows booked – and their singer had just quit. Jerome had a gig with his rockabilly band in a bar, and the owner told Jerome that his waitress Cheri Addo could sing, so she got up and performed Ben E. King's *Stand By Me*. "I asked her, 'Cheri, do you have a band already?'" says Jerome. "She said no. I said, 'Well, you've got one now!'"

Adopting the stage name Georgina Peach, Addo jumped in at the deep end, playing two shows on the same day at Atomic Festival in Brussels and the Paradiso in Amsterdam. "Yeah, really in the deep, like a little fish," she says. The band released their debut *I'm On My Way* in 2019, capturing their powerhouse vintage R&B sound.

> **"We're a crossover. We play lots of blues and jazz festivals as well, so this band fits into all the scenes." – CC JEROME**

Had you ever fronted a band before this?
Addo: No, I'd only sung under the shower. I did some small gigs with rappers, so I was a little familiar with working with a camera and standing before a audience, but I'd never been with a professional band like this. I was really impressed with all the guys, how well they play, how they took me in, the advice they gave me. I felt at home immediately.

Were you worried about bringing in a new singer at such short notice?
Jerome: We weren't nervous at all because Cheri had a really good soul-gospel voice, she looks the part. But neither was she.
Addo: It looked that way, but I was!
Jerome: She was a diva from the start.

Have you always been into roots music?
Jerome: I've been doing it for 30 years, pretty much. I've made a lot of albums and played with a large selection of rockabilly stars: Billy Lee Riley, you name them, Jack Earls, Johnny Powers. I've been working with Linda Gail Lewis for a while and with the same band, The Savoys, I've done an album with Rusty Pinto from Australia. That was more 50s, 60s rhythm and blues, and we continued doing that and that's how this band started.
van der Meulen: I grew up with the music my parents played: gospel, early jazz and lots of blues in our house, Tina Turner, Joe Cocker, stuff like that. I listened to lots of rock'n'roll. I started playing saxophone when I was maybe 15, played for 10 years, then I quit. But 15 years later I picked it up again and started performing in all kinds of bands. I'm more from the jazz wing, but play rock'n'roll with these guys. I've organised events in Amsterdam for 20 years now – Amsterdam Beat Club – and I book lots of artists. CC played there a couple of times. He contacted me to join in a gig somewhere and it felt good, so I stuck, I guess. Can't get rid of me!

What's the scene like over in the Netherlands?
van der Meulen: You have the typical 50s and 60s scenes which are very separate, like in England.
Jerome: Like the mod scene and the rockabilly scene, but we play both with this band. We're a crossover. We play a lot of blues and jazz festivals as well, so this band fits into all the scenes, which is good – more gigs."
van der Meulen: More gigs and more fun.
Jerome: If you just play in the rockabilly scene for 25 years and only that, you see the same faces at every gig, no matter what country, which is great but it's fun to meet other people. We get bigger audiences at the blues and jazz gigs.

You've started playing some ska, too?
van der Meulen: We just recorded four ska tracks a few months ago. We're not sure if it's going to be a single or an EP or what we'll do, but it sounds great. We're happy with the results.
Jerome: Do you know The Shakin' Pyramids, the 80s rockabilly band? We turned one of their songs, *Sunset Of My Tears*, into a ska song, which worked out pretty good.

Blues, jazz, ska, R&B, doo-wop…
The Savoys take them all on

van der Meulen: And one by Ruth Brown, *I Don't Know*, then a duet with Earl Jackson, *It's A Rockin' Good Way*, and then the fourth is *What A Man* by Linda Lyndell.
Jerome: We were booked for a big ska weekender in Germany and it got cancelled because of Covid, so we figured we had time, we might as well record some ska so we've got another scene we can do gigs in.

What was your reaction when you were introduced to the rockin' scene, Cheri?
Addo: I thought it was really cool because I like the dancing. The men have class and style, the women look very nice and chic, but I also noticed there is a lot of old folks.
Jerome: Like your band!
Addo: Yeah!
van der Meulen: You will attract a younger crowd.
Addo: That's true. After four years with these guys, I feel it's changing. Some gigs there are more youths, some gigs it's still only old people.

CC has shared stages with many of rockabilly's old guard

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van der Meulen: It's a problem with the scene gigs, not many youngsters come. There's nothing wrong with older people, but it's also nice to attract a younger crowd and that's what you reach when you go to different kinds of festivals. At regular festivals in Holland you get a whole different crowd and they like this music, too. They hear it and say, 'Wow what is this?'
Addo: There was one gig in Amsterdam, at Rollende Keukens, and that was one full of people younger than me.
van der Meulen: And they went wild!

Any plans for a follow-up to *On My Way*?
Jerome: We first want to release the ska EP, and we're working on a new album. The first one was very successful, we got a lot of good gigs including TV appearances and stuff like that. But then Covid hit and it was all over, so we've got to do a new album which tops the previous one.
van der Meulen: We've just come back from a great project in Germany with the guys from The Firebirds. The whole show was maybe two-and-a-half hours. We would start, Earl Jackson was there, too, Cody Lee Smart, a great piano player from the UK. We performed for 45 minutes, The Firebirds would do an hour-and-a-half, then we played with Earl Jackson. It was amazing, big venues and great crowds. We're also going to play on the Rock'n'Roll Cruise, which is going from Italy to Greece and Croatia in October. The Savoys will be the house band, Georgina will be there, Earl Jackson will be there, so that's really something to look forward to.
Jerome: We're trying to get together a rhythm and blues, rock'n'roll theatre show, with different artists, have some doo-wop, rhythm and blues. That's in the works.

What have been the highlights of your musical life with The Savoys?
van der Meulen: For me, it's moments in a gig where it all comes together – we play really well, Georgina sings beautifully, there's all this talent onstage and it crosses over to the crowd. It can happen in a bar, in Paradiso, it's fantastic.
Jerome: I guess it's good to go over well in the rockin' scene because that scene complains about just about anything.
Addo: I have to say, the music we bring is more appreciated now than when we started, at least that's how I feel. People are more enthusiastic and they like to hear something new.

Are there plans to write any original music with the band?
Addo: Yes, definitely.
van der Meulen: Cheri is working on it now with the piano player and when we have some basics…
Jerome: Then we're going to build it further before adding some guitar riffs and horn riffs.
van der Meulen: We already tried but it didn't turn out as good as the music we already play. So that's difficult. It has to be really good." ✶

We'll Never Find Another You

To mark the 40th anniversary of the passing of one of Britain's finest ever rock'n'rollers, *Vintage Rock* joins friends and fans to celebrate the remarkable life and legacy of Billy Fury

WORDS BY **DAN BIGGANE**

The premature passing of Billy Fury on 28 January 1983, left Britain bereft of one of its brightest ever rock stars. A pioneering pop sensation, whose influence paved the way for future generations of chart-topping UK artists, Fury was a complex character. Behind his striking teen idol style and highly provocative showmanship, existed an unassuming introvert, humbled by the trappings of fame and widespread adoration.

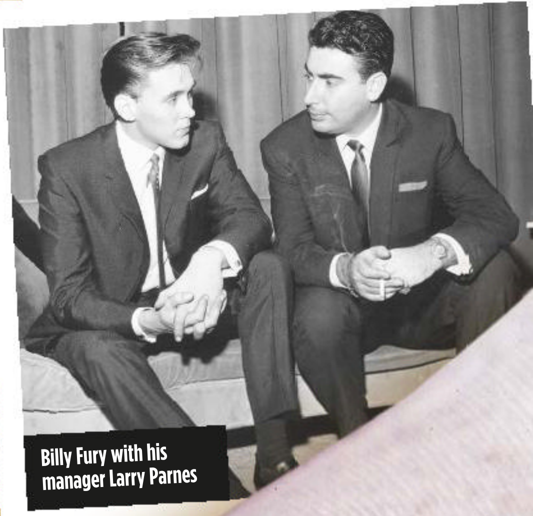
Born Ronald Wycherley on 17 April 1940, the future idol of Britain's burgeoning rock'n'roll scene worked in the Liverpool docks after leaving school at the age of 15. Inspired by country and western stars such as Hank Williams, who he believed sang "about real life and how it feels when you get let down", Wycherley started composing and performing his own material at local shows.

In May 1958, he cut a six-track acetate at Percy Phillips' Sound Recording Services in Liverpool. Laid down just a couple of months prior to The Quarrymen's now famous visit, the influence of Elvis Presley loomed large with covers of *Have I Told You Lately That I Love You*, *Playing For Keeps*, *Paralyzed* and *I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone* all featured. The recording also included his self-penned composition, *Love's A-Callin' (aka The Yodelling Song)*, which had been influenced by the Slim Whitman number *Indian Love Call*.

After his mother wrote a letter and a copy of the recordings was sent to Larry Parnes, young Wycherley was invited to meet with the UK pop impresario when The Larry Parnes Extravaganza package tour rolled into Birkenhead. On 1 October 1958, the teenage Teddy Boy rocked up to the Essoldo Theatre, with a headful of songs and a guitar around his neck, hoping to impress the manager and his protégé Marty Wilde. His appearance that evening went on to become the stuff of pop music legend.

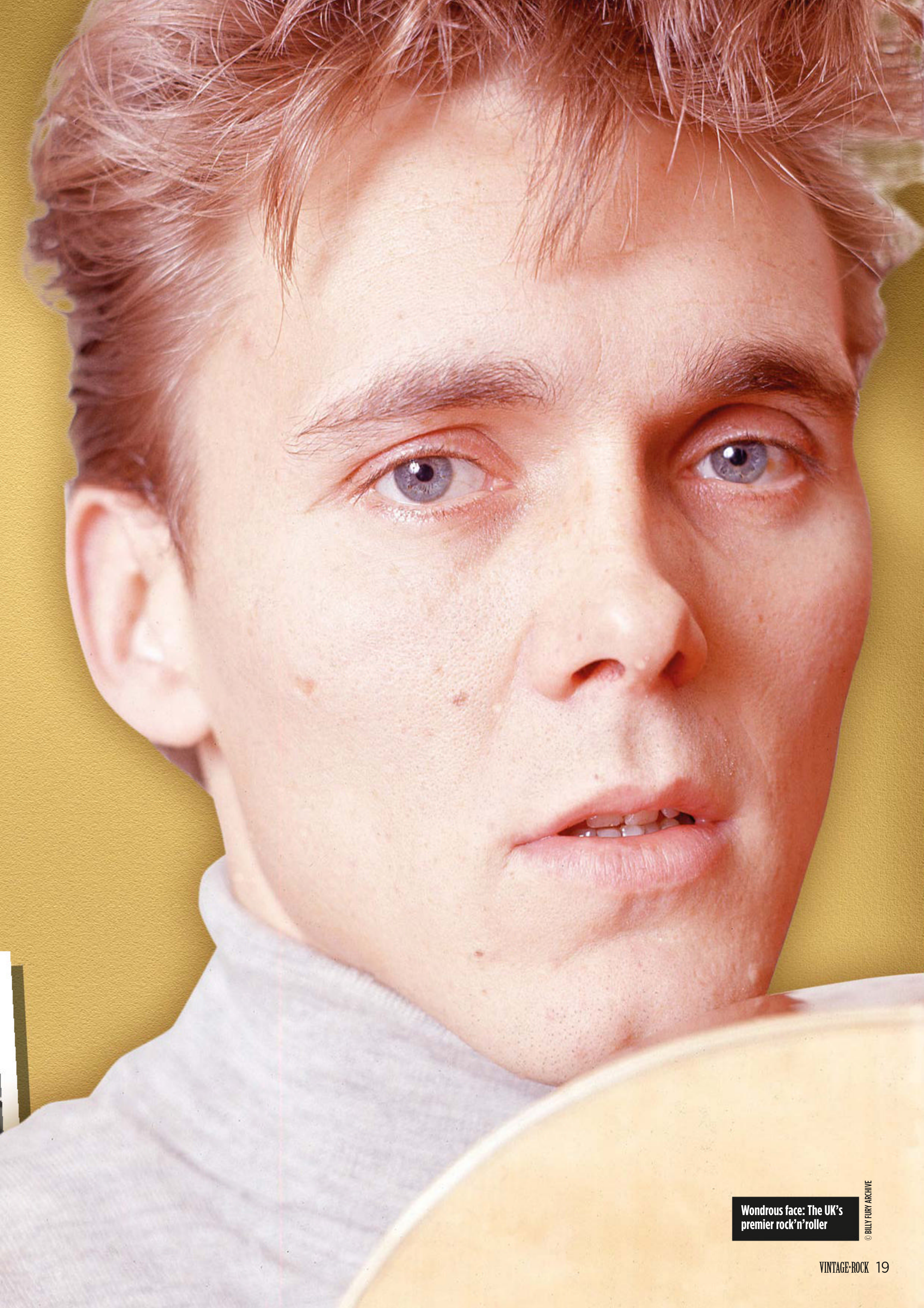
"Backstage at the show, Larry brought this lad in and said, 'This young guy has got some songs he wants to play for you'," Wilde tells *Vintage Rock*. "He played me a couple of the numbers he'd written, and I told Larry that I didn't think it would be fair for me to take them because they were *really* good. I suggested that Billy sang them ➡

> Billy was inspired by country stars such as Hank Williams who sang about "real life and how it feels when you get let down"



Billy Fury with his manager Larry Parnes

© LES LEE/GETTY IMAGES



Wondrous face: The UK's premier rock'n'roller

© BILLY FURY ARCHIVE

The Parnes stable: (L-R) Billy Fury, Marty Wilde, Dickie Pride, Larry Parnes, Vince Eager and Kenny Packwood in 1959

Play It Cool: Billy tunes in to the wireless

© BILLY FURY ARCHIVE

himself and Larry took me at my word by pushing him through the curtains right on to the stage in front of the excited audience. Poor Billy had no idea that he was going to perform, he wasn't wearing any stage clothes or makeup, and I think he sang two, maybe three, songs. I'm pretty sure *Maybe Tomorrow* was one of them. He went down an absolute storm. It was a typical Larry move, but he'd do things like that and turn people into stars... But Billy was a natural star.”

> "When I catch early footage, I realise how great he really was. Billy was right up there with the very best." – MARTY WILDE

The UK's premier music manager had previously taken a Bermondsey boy called Thomas Hicks, re-christened him, and established Tommy Steele as Britain's first rock'n'roller. Inventing names which he thought best reflected a performers' character, Parnes swiftly formed a celebrated stable of stars. Alongside the aforementioned Wilde (Reginald Leonard Smith aka Reg Patterson), he created among others, Vince Eager (Roy Taylor), Dickie Pride (Richard Kneller), Lance Fortune (Christopher Morris), Duffy Power (Ray Howard), Johnny Gentle (John Askew), Terry Dene (Terence Williams), Nelson Keene (Malcolm Holland), and Georgie Fame (Clive Powell). With his rock star potential and undoubted talent, Parnes immediately signed up the handsome Ron Wycherley and it was then that Billy Fury was born.

Wilde says: “I think Billy Fury was a good name for him, and 'Marty Wilde' was great

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A WONDROUS PLACE ONLINE

THE SOUND OF FURY · BILLY FURY
MONO
DEAM
the sound of FURY

The Billy Fury Archive, created and curated by lifelong fan Lee Fry, is a delightful treasure trove of photos and articles. Fry tells *Vintage Rock*: “I was only five when Billy died, so I never got to see or meet him, but I think I’ve read everything there is to read about him!

“My passion for Billy started after my parents bought me a record player one Christmas. The gift came with a couple of records that must’ve been in the charts at the time, but obviously I didn’t like them because I pretty much ignored them. My dad, who is a big music fan, must have been quite disheartened that I seemingly had no interest in music, but he let me have a browse through his record collection. I have no idea why, but I picked out Billy’s 1982 comeback single, *Devil Or Angel*, and played it to death! My dad, probably fed up of hearing the same song over and over, let me have some more records. I found the *Sound Of Fury* LP and I was hooked!

“I started the archive a few years ago, firstly on social media, then I decided to create a website with a full archive of original interviews and articles. I’ve collected Billy memorabilia for several years and wanted to put everything in one place that was accessible to fans.

“I’m very proud of the archive and the feedback I receive is amazing. I’ve met some fantastic people and fans love to share their stories or send me photos of themselves with Billy. Finding a ‘new’ photo of him is always a magical moment.

“I hope he would have liked how he’s so fondly remembered, but I think he might be a bit embarrassed by it all. For me, Billy stands above other acts of that time. He’s one of those rare artists that men and women both adore. He went on to become a huge pop star and those massive hits will ensure he will be remembered as one of the biggest-selling artists of the 60s. However, he was a genuine rocker and, ultimately for me, he personified cool… Billy will always be cool.” Find out more at billyfuryarchive.com.

for me. It was the making of me in many ways, but I hated it at first, it sounded like some American twit, so it took me a while to get used to it. I can’t speak for Billy, but I’m sure he would have felt the same… I’m sure his mum was in shock just like mine was! While we weren’t softies and didn’t take nonsense from anybody, I don’t think we were particularly wild or furious. He was actually a very shy and quiet man.

“Larry could be a real pain, but you had to have your own opinions and not let him take over. I think Billy and I were lucky, we managed to get our own way most of the time. While there was a lot of competition among other artists in the stable, the camaraderie between me and Billy was great.

“I think we were destined to be close friends because of the way I treated him with respect when we first met. He was a great rock’n’roll singer and we were both on the same page. The fame, money and screaming girls was all great fun, but we really bonded over our shared passion for music and what we were doing.

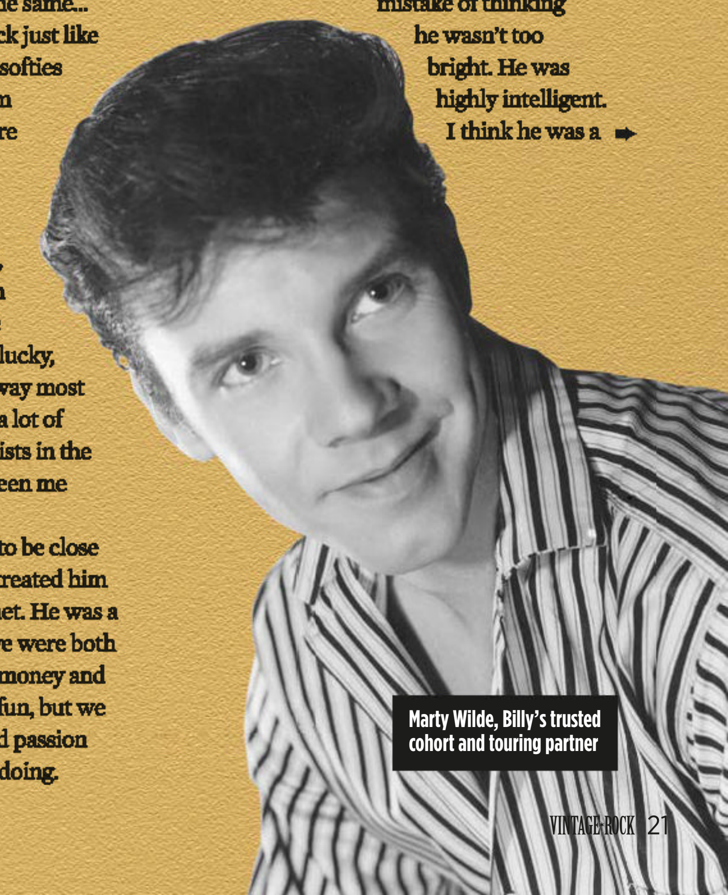
“If you look at those early pictures of Billy, when he’s wearing casual clothes, he looked so cool. There’s a lovely photograph of Billy and I with Jimmy Tarbuck backstage at the Liverpool Empire and Billy effortlessly steals the picture. It’s funny, I’ll sometimes see a new film clip of Billy and it will bring back so many happy memories… when I catch early footage, I realise just how great he really was. Billy was right up there with the *very* best.”

ONCE UPON A DREAM

Fury released his first single for Decca, *Maybe Tomorrow*, in January 1959 and immediately had a UK Top 20 hit. Within a year, in March 1960, he landed in the UK Top 10 with his self-penned composition, *Colette*.

A steady slew of fine singles then followed, including the brooding *Wondrous Place* and enchanting *A Thousand Stars*, before he scored a hat-trick of Top 5 hits with *Halfway To Paradise*, *Jealousy* and *I’d Never Find Another You*. His debut album, *The Sound Of Fury*, featuring 10 original numbers credited to either Fury or his pseudonym Wilbur Wilberforce, was released in May 1960 and would go on to be heralded as one of the finest British rock’n’roll albums of all time.

“He was a funny lad and had a childlike quality,” Wilde continues, “but because he was so very shy, some people made a mistake of thinking he wasn’t too bright. He was highly intelligent. I think he was a ➡



Marty Wilde, Billy’s trusted cohort and touring partner great writer, and I don't think he ever realised his full potential because he was always so busy."

It's a sentiment echoed by Colin Paul, singer with The Persuaders and one of the organisers of the Billy Fury Weekends: "Writing his own songs was something nobody else was really doing and wouldn't do until a few years later when The Beatles came along. Billy was a genius and I believe he wrote from the heart. Every song touched you. Even the songs he wrote later in life had that personal feel. I guess you could say it was like he was singing directly to you. Hearing his voice for the first time, when I was around 14, left such a lasting impression on me. That sound still sends shivers down my spine."

A LONG ROAD AHEAD

Initially backed by Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames, Parnes held auditions in Liverpool for a new supporting group. The Silver Beetles, who later dropped the 'Silver' and became The Beatles, tried out for Billy, before The Tornados landed the gig. Drummer Clem Cattini tells *Vintage Rock*: "I originally worked with Billy at the end of the 50s before we'd formed The Tornados. Back then we were called The Beat Boys and played with a number of Larry's acts. I left Larry to work with Johnny Kidd & The Pirates but returned once The Tornados had formed. It was our bassist, Heinz Burt, who approached Billy to work with him again. Billy was really pleased because he saw it as a reunion.

"Billy was a nice guy and one of the boys. There were no motorways back then and we had to travel everywhere – from Edinburgh to the Isle of Wight – by coach. Billy travelled with everyone else and slept in the same hotels – although most of the time we couldn't afford hotels, so we'd sleep in the coach. Parnes' management style was very similar to Colonel Tom Parker in many ways – Billy was paid £50 a week and we got £25, but to be fair Larry did put all those shows

"Just one of the boys" – Britain's 'blond Elvis'

© BILLY FURY ARCHIVE

SILVER SCREEN STAR

Styled on the Elvis's movies, Billy Fury made his big-screen debut in 1962's *Play It Cool*, directed by a young Michael Winner. The filmmaker later admitted that directing Fury at Pinewood Studios was his first break into feature motion pictures. Initially snubbed by agents and bookers the film was trialed in just three cinemas yet the response from the kids was overwhelming. As Winner admitted in the BBC's *Omnibus: 'Halfway To Paradise'* documentary: "It was obvious they adored him."

The movie sees Fury star as Billy Universe opposite the likes of Bobby Vee, Shane Fenton and Helen Shapiro, who had scored Top 3 hits with all four of her first UK singles. Fury's rendition of *Once Upon A Dream* was the only track from the film to chart when it peaked at No.7 in August '62.

Play It Cool was a flimsy affair and when asked if he had plans for any more movies, Fury politely responded that it would be another musical, "hopefully with a bit more story". His next cinematic outing, 1965's *I've Got A Horse*, would embrace the star's love of animals. The semi-autobiographical tale, co-written by Larry Parnes, featured Fury's own horse, Anselmo, who had raced in the 1964 Epsom Derby and finished fourth. An off-screen romance blossomed between Fury and co-star Amanda Barrie, but the relationship wouldn't go the distance.

In 1973, Fury bounced back from a period of semi-retirement to feature as Stormy Tempest in the drama *That'll Be The Day*, starring David Essex (pictured left). The tie-in double LP, which featured Fury on five tracks, topped the UK albums chart for seven weeks. However, it dramatically dropped out of sight for the week ending 18 August 1973, when all compilations listed as 'various artists' were no longer eligible. However, Fury's hot takes on *Long Live Rock* and *What Did I Say*, highlight just how rollickingly good his voice still was during this time.

© ALAMY

Fury's friends recall his relaxed, introverted personality off stage

Golden Boy: Fury with Heinz Burt of The Tornados in 1962

DECCA
WE WANT BILLY!
Billy Fury and The Tornados

on and put a lot of money back into the business. We never really had time for any crazy shenanigans on the road. We'd arrive at a town or city, go on stage, play our set, come off stage and head back to the coach. We'd get up in the morning, go to the local baths for a wash, and then head off to the next gig… it was far from a glamorous rock'n'roll lifestyle!

"While he was one of the lads, he was also quite introverted. However, on stage he was a completely different guy and such a great performer. The shows were crazy and, from my perspective, I could see the audiences' reaction and it was fantastic. When we played those upbeat numbers and Billy struck a pose, the audience went crazy. We got banned in Ireland after Billy did an Elvis wiggle. The management said, 'If you do that again, we'll pull the curtain down on you', so the next night as soon as Billy wiggled his bum the curtain came down on us and they cancelled the whole tour. We had to sit in Ireland for five days doing nothing. There was also this time in Scotland when a big Scotsman in the audience took exception and said, 'You wiggle your arse again and I'll do you in'. When we finished playing, Billy ran off the stage and I fortunately got my drumkit in the doorway to stop the burly fella getting hold of Billy. But that was a rare occasion – I think the boys liked him as well as the girls, because he was so rock'n'roll."

In 1963, The Tornados recorded *We Want Billy!* – one of the first live albums released in the UK – which featured Fury originals alongside popular covers such as *Sweet Little Sixteen*, *That's All Right* and *Unchain My Heart*.

Cattini continues: "*We Want Billy!* was cut at Decca with an invited audience but you couldn't hear any of the music because of all the screams. It had to be edited to reduce the shrieks – that's the sort of effect he had. It was like going to a Beatles concert, but the likes of Billy and Marty Wilde, generated that hysteria years before they arrived.

"Billy and Marty paved the way for bands like The Beatles, but when they came along, they changed the scene completely… Cliff had a bad time, The Shadows had a bad time, all the big acts had a bad time. I can remember playing in Liverpool with Billy and The Beatles would always come and ask if they could say hello to him, they were huge fans."

Wilde adds: "We loved The Beatles. But when they became the hot new things on the scene, things didn't go too great for ➡

"The Beatles would always come and ask if they could say hello to him, they were huge fans" – CLEM CATTINI

© BILLY FURY ARCHIVE

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> "When Billy came along, we really had someone who could rival Elvis Presley or Eddie Cochran" – GRAHAM FENTON

any of us. I'll never forget the time Billy and I turned up to play a show and our names were written in biro on a piece of paper and stuck on the window of the door. It got that bloody bad [laughs]."

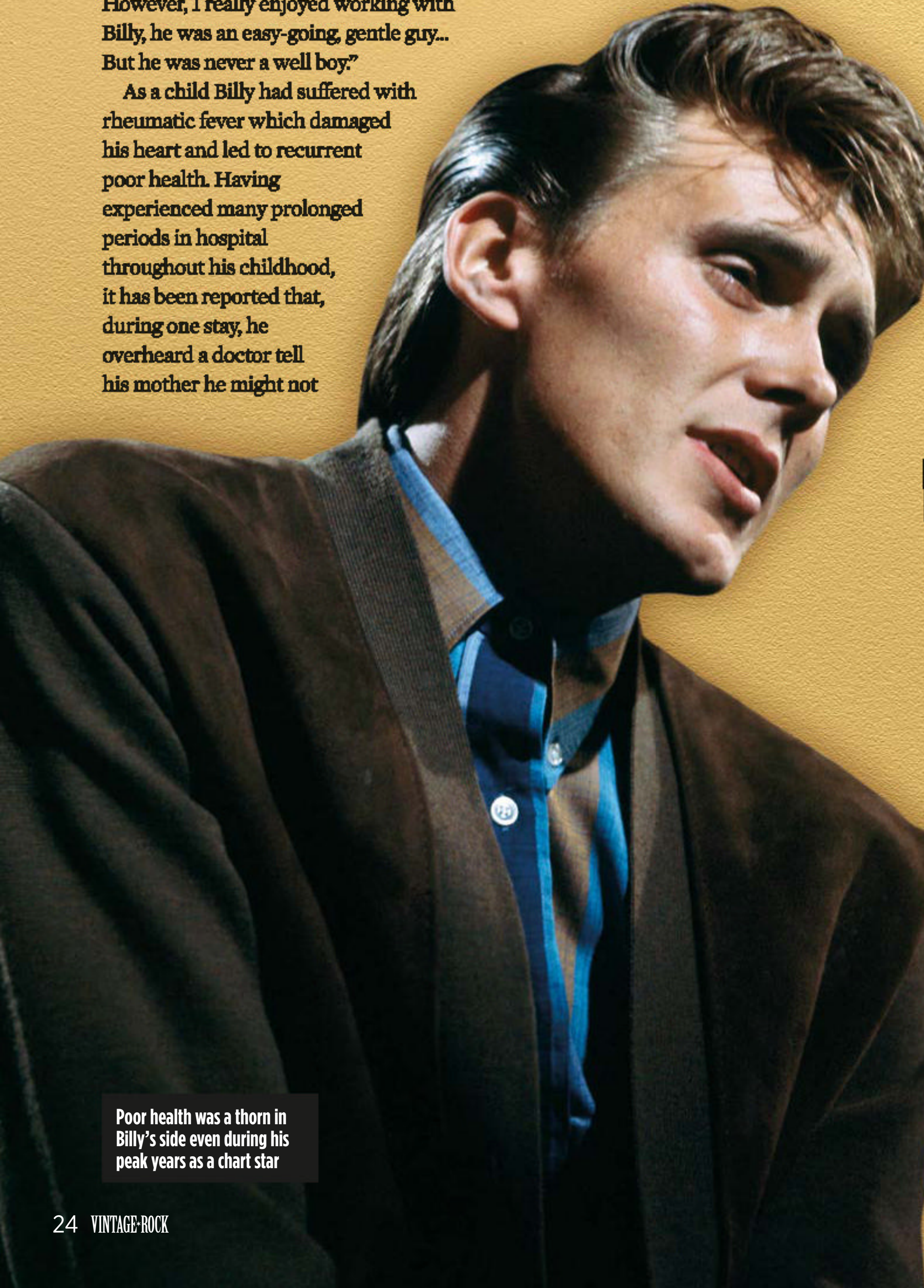
IN THOUGHTS OF YOU

"We eventually split with Billy because of arguments between The Tornados' management and Larry," reveals Cattini. "We were contracted to gig for Parnes and he wouldn't let us go and play the States. However, I really enjoyed working with Billy, he was an easy-going, gentle guy... But he was never a well boy."

As a child Billy had suffered with rheumatic fever which damaged his heart and led to recurrent poor health. Having experienced many prolonged periods in hospital throughout his childhood, it has been reported that, during one stay, he overheard a doctor tell his mother he might not live to be 30. He'd go on to share with loved ones that he expected to die young. "Billy always said he wouldn't live to an old age," Marty Wilde remembers. "I'd tell him not to be so daft, but I think he had already accepted that he wouldn't."

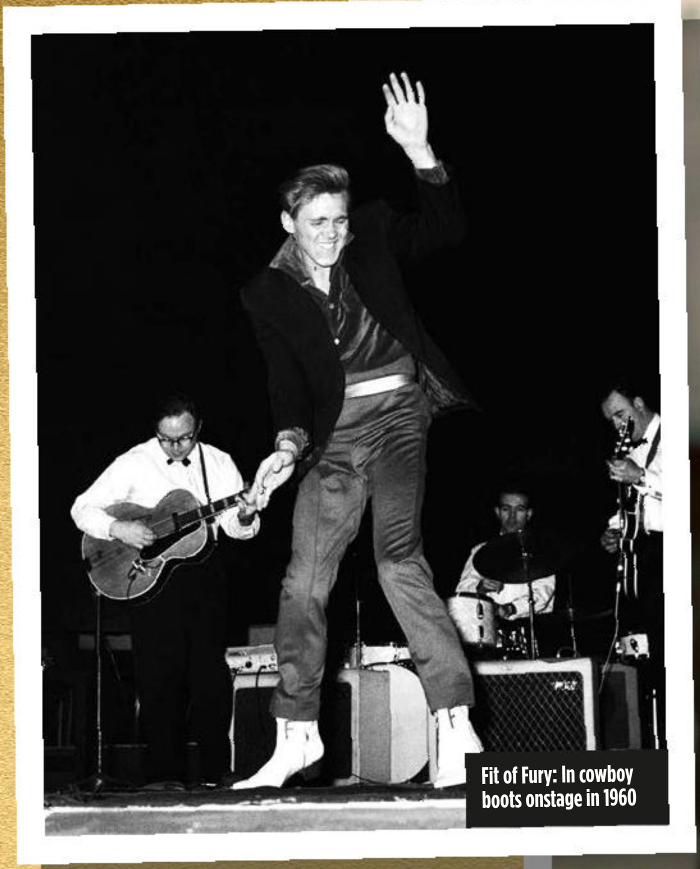
Fury's heart problems continued to plague him into his 20s. While 1961 through to 1965 would prove to be Billy's best years for chart success, with *Last Night Was Made For Love, Once Upon A Dream, Like I've Never Been Gone, When Will You Say I Love You, In Summer, It's Only Make Believe* and *In Thoughts Of You* all reaching the Top 10, his affliction meant he would have to cut some performances short or be removed entirely from certain engagements. Fans were told that he was suffering from exhaustion or flu, but by the 70s his health had deteriorated so dramatically that the singer eventually needed to undergo two critical heart operations to repair and replace damaged valves.

On 5 August 1972, months after his first major treatment, Fury appeared at The London Rock & Roll Show at Wembley Stadium alongside his heroes Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Bill Haley And His Comets and Chuck Berry. Graham Fenton, from show openers The Houseshakers, says: "Backstage, I went around all the dressing rooms, and was thrilled to bits to meet Billy as I'd long admired him. In the UK we had Cliff Richard, who was a sharp-looking fella, but when Billy came along, we really had someone who could rival Elvis Presley or Eddie Cochran. He was so excited about the show and all the legendary artists who were starring on the bill. He was such a warm character and I thought he appeared to be in good health. However, a few years later, when I saw him on the television, I got pretty upset by how thin he was looking... you could see he wasn't well."



Poor health was a thorn in Billy's side even during his peak years as a chart star

Elvis on set in 1962's *Girls! Girls! Girls!*



Fit of Fury: In cowboy boots onstage in 1960

The star appears on TV during his mid-60s pomp

Wilde continues: "Billy was a guest when I was the subject of *This Is Your Life* in 1982. I was delighted to see him but when I gave him a hug, I could feel how much weight he had lost. I knew something was wrong. He would spend many weekends with me and my wife, Joyce. He was a keen ornithologist and adored animals. He would disappear into the forest opposite our home for hours and was so happy birdwatching. Joyce and I tried to get him better and I wish he had stopped working for a little while and rested more..."

Despite his frailty, it appeared that a comeback might have been on the cards for Fury in the early 80s, when he entered the studio to cut a new album entitled *The One And Only* with Stuart Colman. "Billy wasn't well," the producer told Spencer Leigh, author of Fury biographies *Halfway To Paradise, Britpop 1955-1962* and *Wondrous Face: The Billy Fury Story*. "His voice was immaculate, and he was in wonderful form. When we cut *Devil Or Angel*, Billy said: 'I didn't think I could sing like that anymore'."

Released as a single in November 1982, his cover of The Clovers' sumptuous R&B classic, which had previously been a US 1960 hit for Bobby Vee, sadly barely registered for Fury, peaking at No.58 in the UK charts. Two months later, in the early hours of 28 January, Fury collapsed following a heart attack at his home in London. He was taken to St Mary's Hospital but died later that afternoon, aged 42.

"I'd been on the road with my daughter Kim in Europe," remembers Wilde. "When we arrived back at Heathrow, we heard the news. We were all devastated... he always knew he wouldn't last, and it's so sad that he was right. But he had a great career and loved his life. He met Elvis, which is more than I ever bloody did!"

"I think Billy would have loved the ongoing appreciation for him and the music he created, it's always nice to think you've left a positive mark," reflects Cattini. "I don't think Billy or Marty get enough credit for being the pioneers of rock'n'roll over here. Their legacy should be a lot greater."

Every year, at the Billy Fury Weekends, thousands of fans join to party, dance, and celebrate that legacy. "The celebrations, as we know them today, started in February 1991 at ➡

TALE OF TWO KINGS

On the cover of his *The Sound Of Fury* debut LP a super-cool Billy Fury is pictured rocking an Elvis-style gold lamé suit. Colin Paul of The Persuaders says: "When I first heard that album, I was convinced it must've been recorded in Memphis. While others of the time were trying to be Elvis clones, Billy was Billy."

Presley inevitably had a huge impact on Fury's sound, as he did for every rocker on both sides of the pond. For Fury, the King's influence would also extend to his risqué live performances and he, too, would be forced to tone down his onstage antics.

While Presley was shooting the *Girls! Girls! Girls!* movie at Paramount Studios, Fury would become the first British star to meet his idol. Armed with two silver discs for *Rock-A-Hula Baby* and *Wild In The Country*, Fury later revealed: "I got quite a surprise, he knew a lot about the scene here."

When quizzed further about the meeting, Fury would say, "I was bowled over, I reckon he must be the most handsome guy in showbiz. Perhaps I'm biased but that's because I'm an Elvis fan... What I liked about Elvis was his terribly polite manners."

Paul, whose tribute to Billy Fury became a huge success, adds: "*The Fury Experience* saw us branch out into bigger theatres and we later expanded by adding Elvis into the mix as *Tale Of Two Kings*. Yes, they called Billy Britain's answer to Elvis, but he wasn't. Billy was in a class of his own and nobody could touch him."

For more details, visit: colinpaulandthepersuaders.com

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CHARMING YOUNG MAN

Back when The Smiths were kings of 80s indie pop, bequiffed frontman Morrissey often eulogised about his love of our cover star. Not only is a beaming Billy Fury pictured on the cover of The Smiths' final single *Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me*, a framed picture can also be spotted on the front of Mozza's 2000 DVD, *¡Oye Esteban!*.

In *NME*'s 'Portrait Of The Artist As A Consumer' feature, dated 17 September 1983, the singer listed 1966 single *I'll Never Quite Get Over You* as one of his must-have records.

Speaking to the BBC the following year, Morrissey's prime cut switched to the UK No.14 hit, *I Will*, however he admitted: "It was impossible to single a record out."

"I was exposed to him at a very early age and everything I heard, I liked," he continued. "He had a tremendous sense of style... With his death quite recently, it made me think even more so about how valuable he really was, and I feel quite sad that he's died and there's been no real recognition of the input he put into popular music in this country."

It's a sentiment echoed in a 1984 *Smash Hits* interview with Ian Birch, where Fury's 1961 LP *Halfway To Paradise* appears alongside the books of Oscar Wilde and a photograph of James Dean among his most treasured items. "Billy's singles are totally treasurable," Morrissey enthused. "I get quite passionate about the vocal melodies and the orchestration always sweeps me away. He always had such profound passion."

So, while ol' Big Mouth's bilious opinions often leave a bitter taste today, we can celebrate this charming young man's absolute adoration for Fury.

Blackpool's Carousel Hotel," Colin Paul explains. "I wasn't involved the first time, but after meeting Billy's brother Albie Wycherley and mother Jean, I've played them all. I struck up a friendship with Billy's family in 1991 when I was in a band called The Stormbeats and they heard our cover of Billy's 1968 song, *Lady*, on the radio. Albie and Jean asked the event organisers, Diane Wardle and June Roth, if we could be added to the bill.

"Jean and I would often sing *In Thoughts Of You* together because it was one of her favourite songs. When Jean passed away, I sang it at her funeral, and it was one of the most difficult things I have ever done.

"I now get to help organise the weekenders with Diane and June. Because we couldn't cater for the number of fans who wanted to attend, we decided to celebrate Billy twice a year and moved them to the larger Savoy Hotel in Blackpool.

"To mark the 40th anniversary of Billy's passing, I'll be performing with The Persuaders at a special show at Liverpool's Cavern Club on 29th January. Billy never got the chance to bring his music to the iconic venue, so I thought we should. "Billy showed me and countless others that anything can be achieved. He influenced so many of the stars that came after – The Beatles, David Bowie,

Fury sings at Radio 1's 'Heroes and Villains' 15th birthday concert at Hammersmith Odeon in London, 23 December 1982

A flame that burnt twice as bright, Billy Fury

Billy's commemorative statue at Liverpool's Albert Dock Pier Head

© ALAMY

Fury fanatics, Colin Paul & The Persuaders

The Smiths – and proved anyone, from all walks of life, could get out there and make something of themselves. From the beginning, his music struck a chord and I know that I'm not alone. There is something about his voice that appeals to all... and when I say all, I really do mean *all*. We have fans from all ages attend our events and I believe Billy's legacy will go on. I don't think he would believe that 40 years after his death, fans would still gather to honour him. Billy's legacy is his music, and it lives on in all of us."

LIKE I'VE NEVER BEEN GONE

On the anniversary of his passing, a statue of Billy located by the Piermaster's House in the Albert Dock area of Liverpool, will be the focal point for Fury fans from around the globe to gather and pay tribute to the much-missed star.

The £44,000 bronze sculpture was unveiled at the National Museum of Liverpool Life on 19 April 2003. Crafted by artist Tom Murphy, the memorial was donated by The Sound of Fury Fan Club after dedicated followers raised the funds. Colin Paul, who attended the event, recalled how the project, conceived by Peter and Lynda Keller, was achieved after six years of hard work. He explains: "The fan club, headed by Chris Eley, raised money at a variety of events such as our weekenders. Some of Billy's clothes and belongings were donated by Albie and Jean for raffle prizes and auctions. I also remember bricks from the original Essoldo Theatre were sold.

"The statue was unveiled on the Easter Saturday by the legendary *Oh Boy!* host, Jack Good, who affectionately said during his speech that, at his peak, 'Billy was the greatest rock'n'roller in the world'... 'in the world!', isn't that the truth!

"I imagine Billy must have been so proud looking down on us all. In the evening we gathered at The Liverpool Philharmonic Hall where Albie performed alongside Tommy Bruce, Wee Willie Harris and The Persuaders... Throughout the night Billy appeared, as large as life, on the big screen and it was the perfect end to a truly memorable day."

Marty Wilde adds: "No matter what happens and how much musical tastes evolve, that statue of Billy will always remain. Maybe, in a hundred years' time, Billy might be regarded as a local folk story, but for now he is very much revered and so fondly remembered. Liverpool is such a passionate city, full of very proud people, and they will always keep Billy's name alive.

"I wish he could be doing what I'm doing now. It's lovely to go out on tour and have people pat you on the back and say nice things. It's such a tragedy that he never got to experience all this later in his life. He has such a devoted following, and he would have appreciated it all so much. People will always love Billy." ✶

"Billy showed me and countless others that anything can be achieved. He influenced so many stars." – COLIN PAUL

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rock & roll
atlantic 8004
ruth brown

Classic album

WORDS BY **JACK WATKINS**

ROCK & ROLL

RUTH BROWN

They called Atlantic Records "the House that Ruth built" after the early successes of the singer that helped them gain a toehold in the R&B market of the early 50s. Released in 1957, Ruth Brown's debut album, *Rock & Roll*, showcased a trailblazing talent...

The 50s was effectively the last decade in which vocal prowess dominated the record industry. There would be many relishable and individualistic vocalists in the years to come – especially in the soul field – but generally speaking, the era of groups and bands moved the emphasis away from outstanding single voices, while the visual image also became more important.

Singer-songwriters created material that, while notable for its lyrical content, made fewer technical vocal demands. Increasingly sophisticated production techniques also drew attention away from outstanding individual voices. In the 50s, however, the key to success was still felt to be a voice that was strong and notable, recognisable almost from the moment the artist opened their mouth. This was the golden age of the 'big voice', and in the R&B and rock'n'roll arenas, there was no finer example than Ruth Brown, impossible to mistake for anyone else and – at her best – totally sensational.

Rock & Roll, released in 1957, was her first album but encapsulated seven years of quality recordings for Atlantic which, along with The Clovers, had effectively shifted the New York company Atlantic from its uncertain beginnings as a jazz label to being one of the most highly regarded purveyors of R&B and pop-oriented rock'n'roll. The earliest track, *So Long*, was also one of the first Brown did for the company, recorded in May 1949. Boss Ahmet Ertegun had signed her in 1948 because he'd been desperate to find a young artist who sounded like Dinah Washington. However, a serious car accident had sidelined Ruth for several months. Her appearance in the studio that day was to enable the 24-year-old to get a feel for recording while a session with Eddie Condon's jazz combo was underway. However, when suddenly asked to step up to the mic, Brown chose to sing *So Long*, an old blues ballad she'd listened to and loved while growing up in Portsmouth, Virginia. With Condon backing her, producer Herb Abramson was impressed enough to release the test recording of *So Long* and an original song, *It's Raining*, as Ruth's first single. It made No.6 on the R&B chart in the States and is a good example of her early style, with only faint traces of the bubbly, extrovert approach that she would shortly develop.

A succession of slow ballads earned her the nickname 'The Girl With The Tear In Her Voice', but a loping version of the Doris Day slowie *Sentimental Journey* packed more punch, with Abramson bringing in the esteemed vocal group the Delta Rhythm Boys – who recorded for Atlantic as the Four Sharps – to sing behind her. Brown's recording was released as a single in 1950 and reissued in 1954.

Atlantic, though, wanted to broaden its selling base. Sales were good in major northern cities like New York and

ROCK & ROLL
RUTH BROWN

1957 • ATLANTIC

Side 1

1 Lucky Lips (Leiber-Stoller)
2 As Long As I'm Moving (Calhoun)
3 Wild Wild Young Men (Nugetre)
4 Daddy Daddy (Toombs)
5 Mambo Baby (Singleton, McCoy)
6 Teardrops From My Eyes (Toombs)
7 Hello Little Boy (Brown)

Side 2

1 (Mama) He Treats Your Daughter Mean (Lance, Wallace)
2 5-10-15 Hours (Toombs)
3 It's Love Baby (Jarrett)
4 Sentimental Journey (Homer, Green, Brown)
5 Old Man River (Kern, Hammerstein)
6 So Long (Melsher, Harris, Morgan)
7 Oh What A Dream (Willis)

Atlantic's very own Miss Rhythm, Ruth Brown

MAIN PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEAR FAMILY RECORDS

Chicago, and over in Los Angeles, but made limited inroads in the South and among R&B fans. Ruth's *Teardrops From My Eyes* was one of the first singles to deliberately target this market and went on become among the biggest R&B songs of 1950. It's a fascinating record because, although it swings rather than rocks, with its sense of restlessness and encapsulation of elements from the swing era, small jazz combos, blues and jumping R&B, it made a mockery of the arbitrary barriers that often get erected between styles of music. Ahmet Ertegun, interviewed by Arnold Shaw in *Honkers And Shouters*, described the song as having a "pop but blues-directed dance-band arrangement."

Charlie Gillett, in his book *Making Tracks: The Story Of Atlantic Records And The Growth Of A Multi-Billion-Dollar Industry* suggested that this was the number that established the Brown recording persona and her way of dealing with men in various song scenarios, "with a wry humour, a seductive catch in her voice, and a generally resilient tone that sometimes made her seem susceptible, to the right guy."

Teardrops From My Eyes was written by Rudy Toombs, who was to provide several songs for Ruth and also wrote *One Mint Julep* for The Clovers. *5-10-15 Hours* was another big Toombs-penned Brown hit from 1952, the title of this suggestive track inspired by the success that Billy Ward And The Dominos had just enjoyed with another raunchy "round the clock" number, *Sixty Minute Man*. It allowed more space for Ruth's sultry personality to express itself. Vann 'Piano Man' Walls, who played on Joe Turner's Atlantic hits like *Chains Of Love* and *Boogie Woogie Country Girl*, was on piano.

While *Daddy Daddy*, again written by Toombs, successfully cashed in on the 50s' mambo mania, it was the Herb Lance and Johnny Wallace-penned *(Mama) He Treats Your Daughter Mean*, recorded at the end of 1952, that was, as Brown told Arnold Shaw, "a monster... the biggest record I ever had – I mean for airplay and the exposure I got. That really made the name of Ruth Brown light up."

The irony is that, at least to begin with, she didn't even like the song and felt it made no sense. But aided by a catchy tambourine intro and the guitar of Mickey Baker, the track gave her a first R&B No.1. Brown would record it again in 1958, this time with Everett Barksdale on guitar and King Curtis on sax in a more rock'n'roll style. A further inferior version in 1962 featured a girly chorus, but the first two incarnations make an interesting comparison – the first recording just has the edge over the second

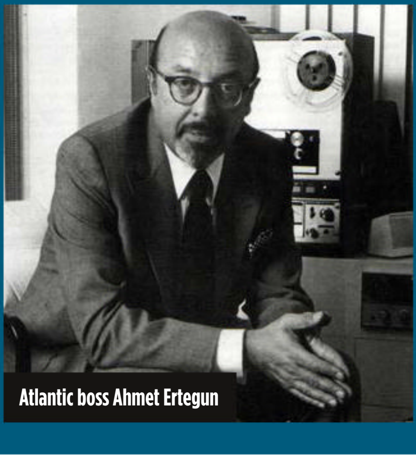
***Rock & Roll* compiled songs from 1949-1956**

FROM GOSPEL TEEN TO R&B QUEEN

"The first woman that I tried to emulate was Billie Holliday," Ruth Brown told Chip Deffaa in his book *Blues & Rhythm: Six Lives In Rhythm & Blues*. Growing up in Portsmouth, Virginia, in the 30s, her family were so poor they barely had enough money to buy records, so her familiarity with blues artists was limited. In fact, she heard more country and western via songs on the jukebox at a restaurant where her mother worked. Deffaa suggests the "hoo-ee" she adds at the end of *(Mama) He Treats Your Daughter Mean* was drawn from country "along with, perhaps, a certain feeling that she has for melodrama". But her emotional expressiveness and sense of rhythm was gained from church singing.

According to Arnold Shaw in *Honkers And Shouters*, when Ahmet Ertegun and Herb Abramson first caught her show in Washington DC they asked her to sing a blues, to which she replied, "I don't like blues." She regarded herself as a torch singer and wanted to sing like Sarah Vaughan.

As Ertegun said, though, she didn't have the range for that. With that in mind, she good-naturedly adapted to singing R&B, which was just as well. While it allowed her to find her unique style, the large young white listening audiences didn't go for undiluted blues, which was hard on the ears. But when Brown sang it in a watered-down form it was compellingly appealing.



Atlantic boss Ahmet Ertegun

© GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS

one, the latter having more obviously generic rock'n'roll touches.

Wild Wild Young Men, written by Ertegun himself under his pen name Nugetre (Ertegun spelt backwards), lived up to the billing. This rollicking number was another R&B smash, though arguably Rose Maddox surpassed even this fabulous recording with her later Columbia version. When played live, the tempo was so fast bandleaders told Brown that no-one could sing the lyric and be understood but she always delighted in proving them wrong.

As for *Hello Little Boy*, written by Brown herself, this raw-rockin' R&B hybrid, once again with horn riffs that were obviously rooted in the swing era, was a tour de force of blowing and shouting. Ruth's exhortations to the players, who included Sam 'The Man' Taylor, are infectious and the whole thing has a feel of unaffected spontaneity. She never recorded anything at a faster tempo, and few could have done so even if they tried. It ranks as one of the great female rockin' performances on wax, blowing out of the water the relatively few other operators in that field during the 50s.

Taken at a slower pace but still bubbling with emotional commitment, the doo-woppy ballad, *Oh What A Dream*, was Brown's self-declared favourite. Another big seller, the vocal backing was supplied by The Rhythmakers, who were actually the stellar Atlantic vocal group, The Drifters. But any hope of a pop crossover was thwarted by a note-for-note Patti Page cover on Mercury. Brown had fond recollections of the man who wrote the song for her, Chuck Willis, describing the tragically short-lived singer songwriter to Arnold Shaw as softly spoken, unassuming, and humble.

> (MAMA) HE TREATS YOUR DAUGHTER MEAN, "REALLY MADE THE NAME OF RUTH BROWN LIGHT UP"
>
> RUTH BROWN

Oh What A Dream might be described as a quintessential Brown vocal, with the back-of-the-throat catch, the squeal and mock tearfulness, overdone for great dramatic effect without feeling like the singer is truly heartbroken. It was a voice that embodied the synthetics of the rock'n'roll era, and was maybe a clue as to why she'd struggle in the following decade to adapt to the more authentic expressions of soul music.

But in the mid-50s, there was no stopping her on the R&B charts. *Mambo Baby* was another No.1, while the jumping *As Long As I'm Moving* gave her snappy lines like, "You've got big broad shoulders, built like a trailer truck."

The song was penned by Jesse Stone under his Charles Calhoun moniker, the writer of other classics like *Money Honey* and *Shake Rattle And Roll* and who did the arrangements on many Brown tracks. Ertegun told Gillett that Stone, "did more

(L-R) Atlantic president Herb Abramson, with Ruth Brown, Ahmet Ertegun and label promo man, Jack Walker

IT WASN'T UNTIL ATLANTIC DEPLOYED JERRY LEIBER AND MIKE STOLLER THAT SHE TASTED POP SUCCESS

JUKE BOX PEARLS

Juke Box Pearls: Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean is a 31-track CD from Bear Family Records covering the years 1953 to 1962 and, alongside a few of her classics, collects together some slightly lesser-heard recordings by Brown. These include the 1958 version of *(Mama) He Treats Your Daughter Mean* and a 1959 incarnation of *5-10-15 Hours*. There's Brown's 1962 take on the LaVern Baker hit *Jim Dandy*, and the brilliant Leiber-Stoller penned "playlet" number from 1959, *I Can't Hear A Word You Say* which, as Ken Emerson puts it in his *Always Magic In The Air: The Bomp And Brilliance Of The Brill Building Era* "was too hip and adult to enjoy the crossover pop success of *Lucky Lips*, which they had written for Brown three years earlier."

Lucky Lips kicks off this entertaining disc which has an image-filled booklet, a discography for the period covered, as well as a 23-page essay from *Vintage Rock* contributor Bill Dahl. The essay outlines Ruth's life and career, from her upbringing and early singing experiences to how she earned her Miss Rhythm moniker from Mr Rhythm himself, the superb 50s belter Frankie Laine, plus her later struggles and stage musical comebacks in the 80s. A great trouper as well as a massively talented artist, Ruth Brown died in 2006 aged 78.

Juke Box Pearls
Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean
RUTH BROWN

to develop the basic rock'n'roll sound than anyone else, though you hear a lot about Bill Haley and Elvis Presley."

It's Love Baby, underpinned by a driving boogie rhythm straight out of the South, drew one of the classic shouting, squealing Brown vocals. For once, though, she was covering someone's else song, the original being by Louis Brooks and his Hi-Toppers.

Despite all this R&B chart success, Ruth's records received little airplay from white radio jocks, even though Ertegun reckoned she "didn't sound all that black." It torpedoed any hopes of crossover success. She tried almost everything, including *Old Man River* (again backed by The Rhythmakers aka The Drifters), the Kern/Hammerstein standard other individualistic artists like Hadda Brooks and Screamin' Jay Hawkins also had fun with. But it wasn't until Atlantic deployed Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller to write *Lucky Lips* that she tasted pop success, finally registering at No.25 in the Billboard Hot 100 in March 1957. Only the follow-up, *This Little Girl's Gone Rockin'*, written by Bobby Darin (not on the LP), would enjoy similar success. Even so, as Shaw noted, along with Dinah Washington, Esther Phillips and Etta James, she was one of the "towering females of R&B."

It's impossible to listen to Brown's records without smiling. ✶

Ruth Brown started singing in Lucky Millinder's big band

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Carol Kaye, the First Lady Of Bass –
a vital player on over 10,000 sessions

THE ACE OF BASS

Acclaimed bassist Carol Kaye talks candidly about her life as a studio player working with the likes of Brian Wilson, Phil Spector and other musical giants from the golden age

WORDS BY **CHRIS WHEATLEY**

At 87, Carol Kaye speaks with a clarity and passion that belies her years. As the go-to session bassist for many of the biggest bands, artists and producers throughout the 50s and 60s, her list of credits is astonishing.

Think of any hit from that era, and there's every chance that it features a Kaye bassline. We begin our conversation, though, by spinning back further to her childhood years. "We were very poor living in a small town in Wilmington, California," Kaye tells *Vintage Rock*. "I went out cleaning apartments after school and spent weeks working for a guitar teacher [Horace Hatchett]. He taught me how to play jazz guitar and hired me to help teach. I was about 13 years old at the time."

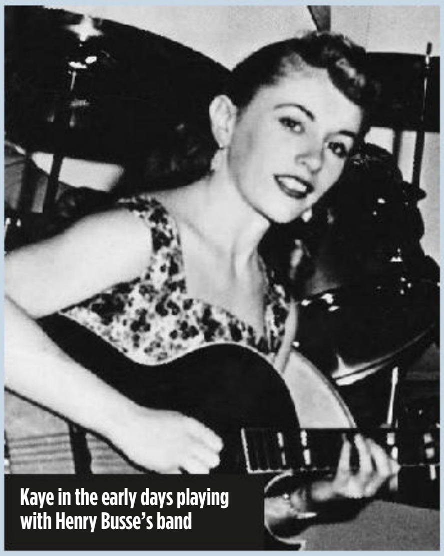
Within less than a few months, Kaye was good enough to begin playing professionally. Some of that natural talent can be attributed to Clyde Smith, Carol's father, with whom she and her mother had a difficult relationship. "I think that his experiences in the First World War traumatised him," she explains. Kaye gave birth to her first child, fathered by Horace Hatchett. That relationship didn't last and, by the late 50s, Carol had married, divorced ("men back then loved to beat their wives and get drunk – most of the good men were married anyway, so I just stayed single"), and was living with her two children in Los Angeles. "I was playing jazz gigs every night," she tells *VR*, "with the very best in the city."

"I was playing jazz gigs every night with the very best in the city"

It was following just such a gig in 1957 that legendary producer Robert 'Bumps' Blackwell approached Carol and invited her to play on a recording session for Sam Cooke. "I didn't even know who Sam was," confides Kaye. "Jazz musicians know nothing about what's going on in other genres. Jazz is the most exciting, hardest kind of music that you can play, so you just don't listen to anything else. I didn't know who Sam was – even though he was a star by that time – but I liked him."

The Cooke song that Carol played on was *Summertime*, and the session was such a success she soon found herself making good money as a studio guitarist working for, among others, Phil Spector. "Basically," says Kaye, "I could quit my day job and just played jazz guitar at night."

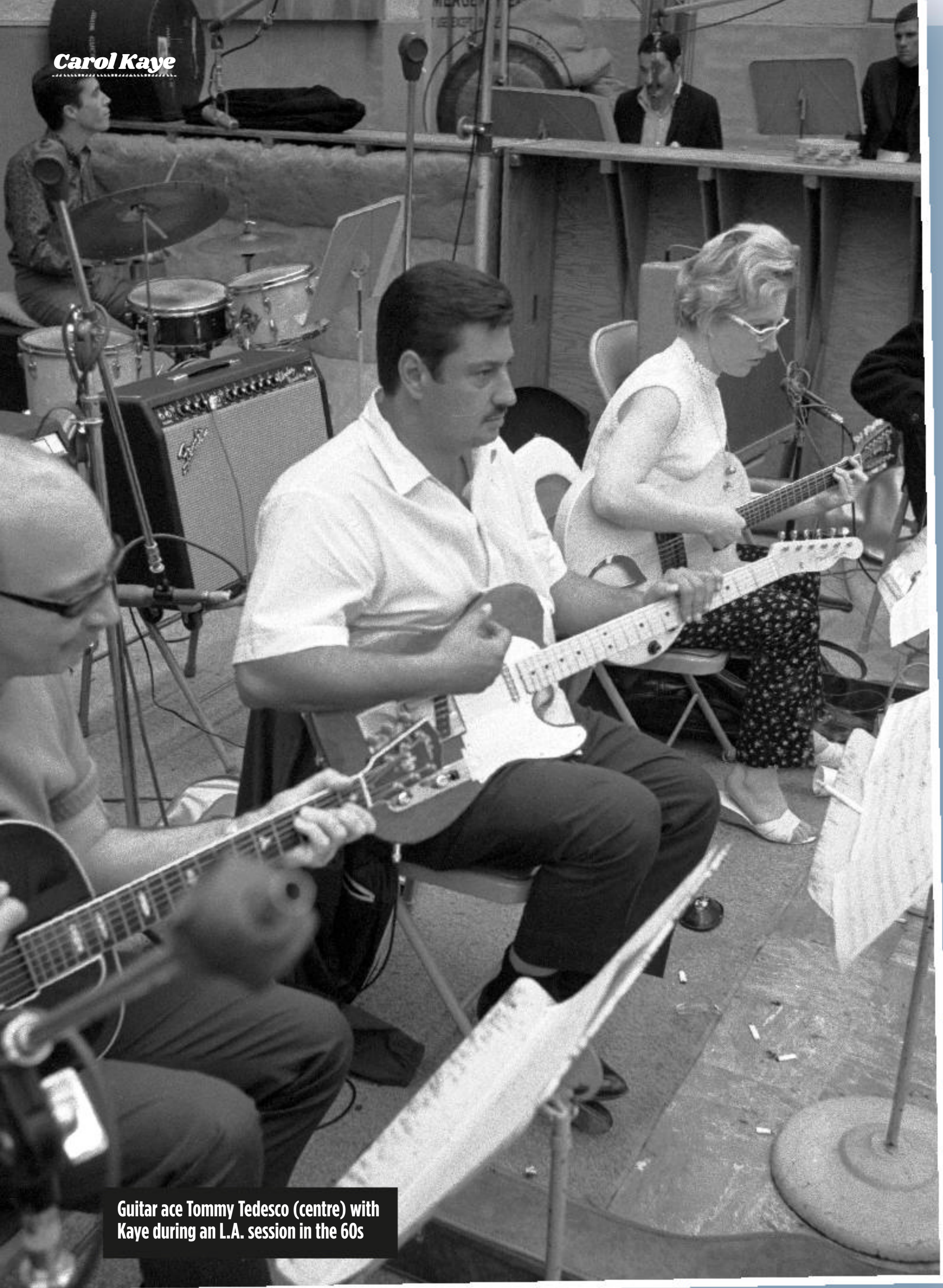
You can hear Kaye's guitar work on countless classics of the late 50s and early 60s, including Ritchie Valens' *La Bamba*, The Crystals' *Then He Kissed Me* and The Righteous Brothers' *You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'*. It wasn't until 1963 that Carol switched to bass: "I was on a record date for Capitol Records. The bass player didn't show up, so they put the Fender bass in my lap. I didn't like playing rock'n'roll on guitar, but I did on bass. They seemed to love what I did and after that I was hired all the time on bass."


Kaye in the early days playing with Henry Busse's band

© GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Kaye found herself part of a loose assemblage of top session players who backed a host of popular acts: "We did the music for The Monkees and all the other groups from that time. We provided the music for Del Shannon, Gary Lewis and the Playboys, Jan and Dean, Ike & Tina Turner, The Animals... we had to invent the music for them."

One of the few female studio professionals during that era, Kaye – though keen to highlight the general underappreciation of women in the music business – did not see herself as a pioneer. "I'm not the first woman," she reminds us. "There were thousands of women in jazz who worked with men since the 1920s. So I didn't do



Guitar ace Tommy Tedesco (centre) with Kaye during an L.A. session in the 60s

Carol in the studio with another first-call guitarist, Bill Pittman, in the early 60s

DEL-FI
RITCHIE VALENS
THE CRYSTALS
THEN HE KISSED ME
•
BROTHER JULIUS
LONDON
THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS
Producer: PHIL SPECTOR
PHILLES RECORDS
Screen Gems-Columbia (BMI) Time: 3:05
YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELIN'
(P. Spector-B. Mann-C. Weil)
Arranger: Gene Page
Engineer: Larry Levine
124
PHILLES RECORDS, A DIVISION OF PHIL SPECTOR PRODUCTIONS

it because of that. I did it because I could feel good. I could make money, and was good at it. When you're poor, you have nothing else. You're just lucky to eat."

But what of being a pioneer in the rock'n'roll world? "Probably," observes Carol, "the women in jazz looked at rock'n'roll and thought, 'I'm not gonna play that s**t'. So you never saw the women in studio work, not at first, but you saw the women in jazz."

When *Vintage Rock* asks Carol if it ever bothered her that she and her fellow players didn't receive public credit, Kaye's answer is unequivocal. "No. It's a business. You're doing it for money – to take care of your family. Probably one or two of us wanted to be famous. The rest of us didn't because we knew what that entailed." *VR* mentions Glen Campbell, who started out as a fellow studio player. "Glen was a special case," says Kaye. "He kind of dropped out of studio work and then, all of a sudden, *he's* hiring *us* to play. He was always a nice person. He wasn't a jazz musician, but he was very fast and played a lot of fine solos. He knew what it was like to be a star. He knew that in a sense, you're a piece of meat to these companies."

Carol played on Campbell's hit, *Wichita Lineman*. "I did the bass part," she tells us, "and I knew right away it was going to be a great song. I think that Glen used this Danelectro bass guitar which had a special pickup and some great sound – he used that for his solo. They asked me to invent some kind of bassline to bring it in with, so I just laid down that line. It was a great session and the fellow who played drums on that, Jimmy Gordon was a really nice guy. He also played on Nancy Sinatra's *These Boots Are Made For Walking*. That's not Hal Blaine, it's Jimmy. He did a lot of super work."

The mention of Hal Blaine is a thorny subject. Kaye has, in the past, been vocal in her opposition to the 'Wrecking Crew' moniker which has been applied to a select group of studio musicians, including

➡

“I knew straight away that Wichita Lineman was going to be a great song”

SPECTOR & MANSON

Kaye worked extensively with the infamous Phil Spector, featuring on hits such as The Ronettes’ *Be My Baby*, Ike & Tina Turner’s *River Deep, Mountain High*, The Crystals’ *Da Doo Ron Ron*, and many more. “He was pretty weird at times,” Kaye recalls, “weird in the sense that he didn’t know how to talk to people. He was strange.” Despite that, Kaye had no problem working with the producer day-to-day. “Everybody’s got some kind of quirk anyway, you know? You excuse them when you work with them. He wasn’t a bad guy.” It was during this time that an infamous and grisly murder occurred – that of film star Sharon Tate at the hands of members of Charles Manson’s cult. It was an incident which sent shockwaves through the Hollywood music community. “Spector got into guns after that Manson murder,” says Kaye. “They all met Manson and even recorded dates with him. I didn’t work for him, but some others did. When the Manson thing happened, all of a sudden Hal Blaine had a gun on his left leg. Many other musicians carried a gun on their leg. And that is why Spector got into guns. It was only later that I heard how weird he got.”

Carol learnt jazz guitar before switching to bass

© GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS JASPER DAILEY/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

herself. “That’s a phony name,” she insists, “which was invented by a certain drummer. We’ve never been called anything but studio musicians. Hal was a bad dude. A very angry man. So no, we were never called that.”

Kaye, who witnessed plenty of substance abuse in the jazz world, is also outspoken as to the detrimental effect of drugs and alcohol in the music industry. “I was never into drugs,” she explains, “you cannot create anything good on drugs. In my day, coffee was the only thing that was allowed in the studio. You’d drink coffee to stay awake because sometimes you’ve got to keep the energy up for multiple takes. Phil Spector used to run 35 takes and I swear it was just because he wanted to kid with us. He probably kept take two.”

Spector, of course, was far from the only innovative producer that Kaye worked with. “Quincy Jones wouldn’t do a film without me,” she casually (and accurately) discloses, but it’s the bassist’s ties to The Beach Boys’ Brian Wilson which are perhaps most fondly remembered. Kaye played on numerous songs for the band, including *Good Vibrations*, *Surfin’ USA* and *California Girls*, as well as most of the *Pet Sounds* album and the aborted *Smile* sessions. “Brian Wilson was different,” she tells us, alluding to the many groups who did not write their own material. “He was a young guy who wrote his own music. Technically, it wasn’t written well – the stems were on the wrong side of the notes, that kind of thing – but he wrote the music and it was nice to work for him.”

In fact, it was Kaye’s later defence of Brian which arguably first made the public aware that many popular bands did not play on

> “Phil Spector used to run 35 takes - I swear it was because he wanted to kid with us”

A JAZZY BEDROCK

“You played every date like it was your last,” states Kaye, when asked if she was aware, at the time, of the unique musical period which she contributed to. “You wanted to make sure to stay in the business, so you played the best you ever could, and that’s what you hear in those recordings – the experience of all the jazz and big band musicians who wanted to stay working.” Throughout our interview, Carol periodically turns the subject back to her beloved jazz, a grounding which she believes is essential for any good player, and the bedrock of that vintage magic. “Back then,” she tells us, “everybody who was in jazz and big bands went into the studio. They asked us because we could read music and could play exceedingly well.” It is this blend of ability, knowledge, versatility and professionalism, Kaye believes, that lives on in the music. “We played the best we ever could on those recording dates. It didn’t matter who it was or what it was, we played it. That’s what we did.” It’s a quality that Kaye thinks has been lost. “The background of the musicians today is not like it used to be. We got our experience by going on the road with big bands, getting great with technique and time. There’s no place to really get that experience these days. Later on, they just couldn’t do it like we did.”

NAMM
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'04

Kaye at the NAMM convention in Anaheim, California, January 2004

The Beach Boys Pet Sounds
Wouldn't It Be Nice/You Still Believe In Me
That's Not Me/Don't Talk (Put Your Head on My Shoulder)
I'm Waiting For The Day/Let's Go Away For Awhile/Sloop John B.
God Only Knows/I Know There's An Answer/Here Today
I Just Wasn't Made For These Times/Pet Sounds/Caroline No
Capitol

their own hits.

"I think that nobody knew that until I started to speak out about it in the late 1990s," explains Carol. "That's the first time that people heard that it wasn't their groups on the records, it was studio musicians, and they went insane. They called me a liar. I thought that they knew, but they didn't."

At the time, Kaye felt the need to stand up to sections of the press which she felt were unfairly attacking the Beach Boy.

"I was sticking up for Brian Wilson because the press was saying all kinds of stuff. They talked about Brian Wilson as though he was crazy. Yeah, he had a rough period going through the drug scene, he went through some bad times, but that didn't make him crazy. He wrote the music, and we recorded the music, and he did it all by himself when he was a young guy."

Brian Wilson with his go-to bassist who played on some of The Beach Boys' finest songs

Talking to Kaye, it's impossible not to get swept up in an incredible sense of history. She was part of the formative years of popular music and involved with many special moments yet it was all in a day's work. During our interview, she drops the occasional line which, reading back, seem incredible. On her sessions with Brian Wilson for *Pet Sounds*: "He was just trying to make some good music, and I had no idea if it would sell or not." On meeting Elvis Presley: "I played on two of his movies. So I didn't know him or anything, but he just seemed real nice. My favourite singer at the time was Frank Sinatra, so that's where I was coming from."

When talking about the changes that she has witnessed in the business, and in the music itself, there's a genuine sense of sadness at what Kaye sees as a gradual decline in the industry. It was this decline, among other factors, which caused her to take a break from studio work in the late 60s to begin a second successful career as a teacher of bass technique. "The quality of the music really fell down when a lot of the young people took over the business," Kaye laments. "The only thing they cared about was money. It wasn't fun anymore, and they would add horns and strings and so on later with overdubs. So it wasn't like when we first started, when it was horn players and the rhythm section together, which was what really created those hit records. It all changed again later on when you had the synthesizers and all that stuff coming in."

It's heartening, though, to experience the warmth of her memories which shine through. "Most of the stars were very good people," she tells *Vintage Rock*, "and fun to be with in the studio. And they cared about us, too. It was a good thing to be in studio work at that time but that's changed now," she adds. "I think technology has made it much worse, because now you have guys that will just push sliders. It's not in the music anymore. It's not the fault of the young people," she is quick to point out, "they don't have the background that we all had. We were able to do a three-hour date, and do three, four or five songs and turn them into hit records. Then we'd go on to the next date and maybe work for Ray Charles – it was all styles of music in the same day. We were able to do that because of the experience that we had [from jazz training] which today's youth can't get.

"We used our talents and sold them to make money to take care of our families. It was respect more than anything that meant a lot to us." ✶

On Glen Campbell: "Glen was a special case… all of a sudden *he's* hiring *us*"

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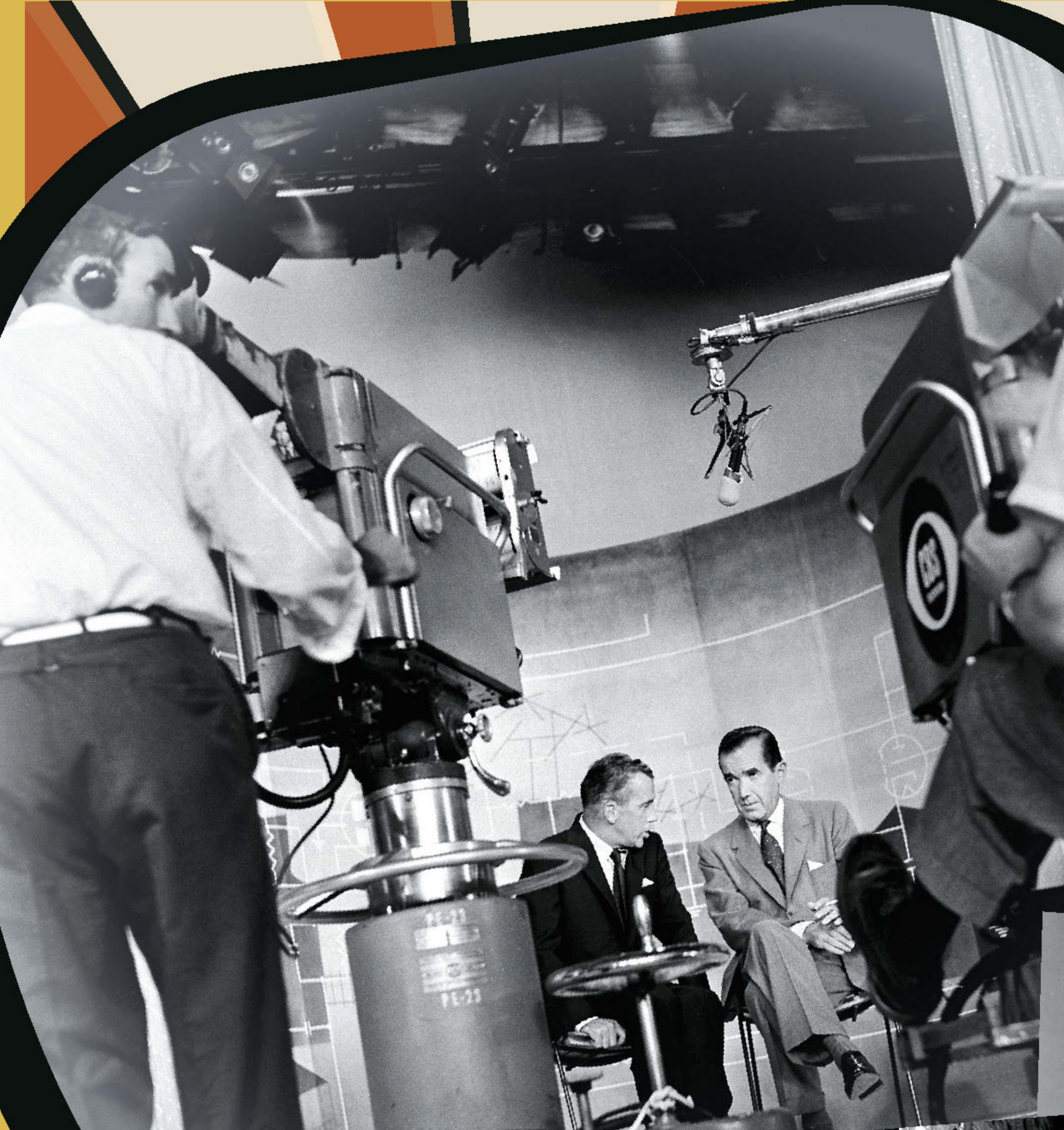
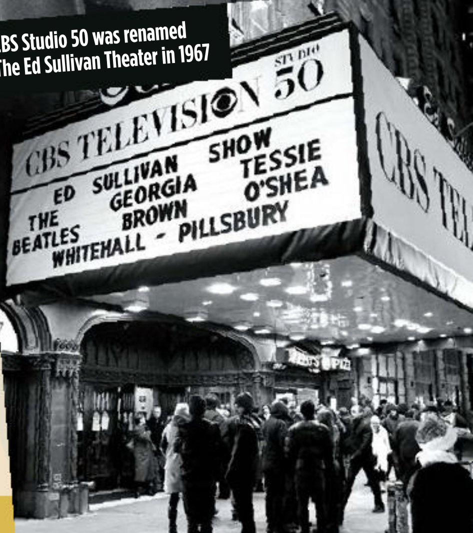


The 'Master Of Variety' with CBS bigwig Edward R. Murrow on the *Toast of the Town*

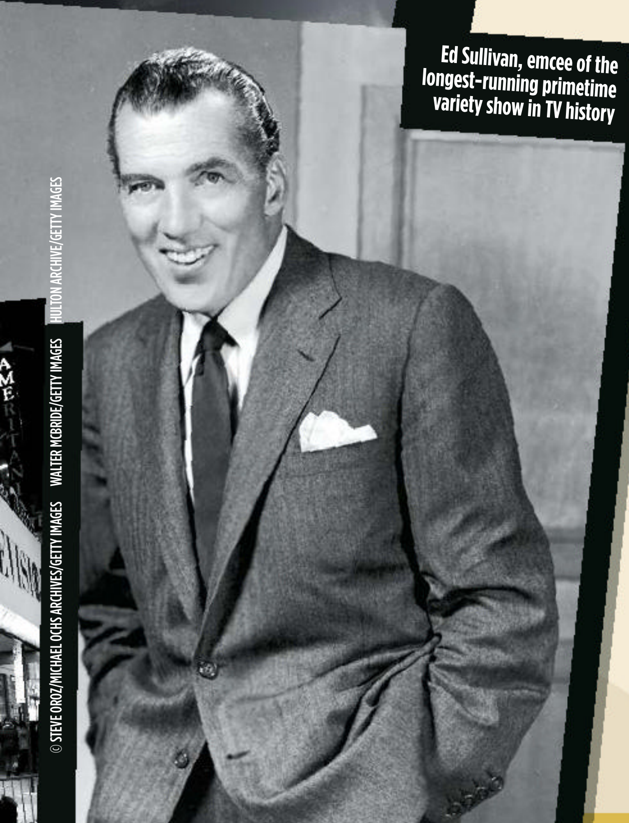

CBS TELEVISION STUDIO 50
CBS TELEVISION SHOW
ED SULLIVAN
THE BEATLES
GEORGIA BROWN
TESSIE O'SHEA
WHITEHALL - PILLSBURY

CBS Studio 50 was renamed The Ed Sullivan Theater in 1967

"AND TONIGHT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN..."

***The Ed Sullivan Show*, which ran on US TV from 1948 to 1971, was the programme that introduced many of rock'n'roll's biggest names to the American public. *Vintage Rock* remembers some of the iconic acts that performed at CBS's hallowed Studio 50...**

WORDS BY **STEVE O'BRIEN**



Ed Sullivan, emcee of the longest-running primetime variety show in TV history

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When *Toast Of The Town* premiered on 20 June 1948, few people watching would have had any inkling that this humble variety show would become one of the most popular television programmes in history. Yet over 1,068 episodes, CBS's *The Ed Sullivan Show* – as it was retitled in 1955 – would introduce some of the most seismic names in music to the American public. Over the course of its 23-year TV life, this Sunday night spectacular would play host to everyone from Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley, Bill Haley and Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino and Ray Charles to The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. Anyone who was anyone in 50s and 60s rock and pop graced that stage at CBS Studio 50 on Broadway and 39th Street. Careers and legacies were launched on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, so much so that it's rare for an issue of *Vintage Rock* to go to press without a reference to it somewhere. Unlike the more country-accented *Louisiana Hayride*, *The Ed Sullivan Show* was open to all genres. Black artists, who generally found it hard to secure TV airtime in the 50s (many networks were fearful of upsetting white Southern sensibilities), were welcome on Sullivan's stage. "The most important thing," the host once said, "is that we've put on everything but bigotry."

The Ed Sullivan Show archive is such a rich cultural treasure trove that in November 2022, its digital channels (which include YouTube, Apple Music and Facebook) surpassed one billion views. For a TV programme that ended more than half a century ago, that's some achievement.

Watching the show now through 2023 eyes, it's amazing how awkward and unpolished this titan of American

Rock bottom: Elvis with Sullivan prior to his 'above-the-waist' third appearance on the show

broadcasting seems. Yet even at the beginning, critics were harsh with regard to *Toast Of The Town*'s often blundering host. One newspaper columnist, Harriet Van Horne, wrote that "[Sullivan] got where he is not by having a personality, but by having no personality." (The host wrote back to the critic, "Dear Miss Van Horne: You bitch. Sincerely, Ed Sullivan.") *Time* magazine, meanwhile, were even more brutal, writing that the presenter resembled "a cigar-store Indian, the Cardiff Giant and a stone-faced monument just off the boat from Easter Island. He moves like a sleepwalker; his smile is that of a man sucking a lemon; his

ED AND THE SUPREMES

The Supremes were a favourite act of Ed Sullivan's, making a grand total of 14 appearances on the show. Over a five-year span, they performed their own hits, as well as numerous Broadway showtunes and other tracks.

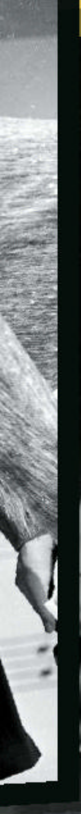
Ed Sullivan Show director John Moffitt recalled that the programme's musical director Bob Arthur came up with the idea of Diana Ross performing classic songs rather than pure pop material with Rodgers and Hammerstein and other composers making it into their setlists.

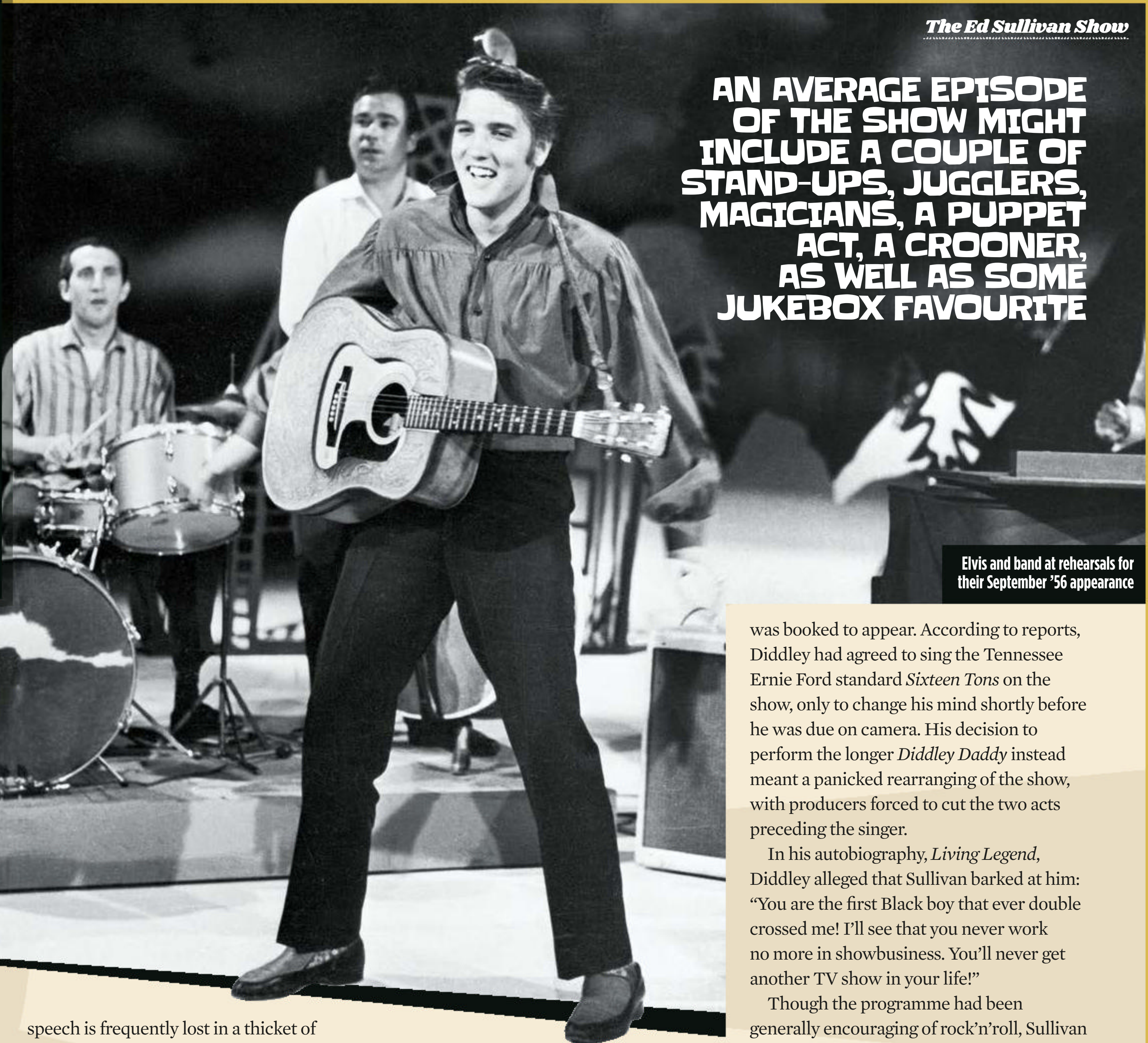
The classic line-up of Diana Ross, Mary Wilson and Florence Ballard appeared seven times on the show from December 1964 through to May 1967, and after that they appeared as Diana Ross And The Supremes, with Ballard's replacement Cindy Birdsong.

The acclaimed trio performed for the final time on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on 21 December 1969, when Diana Ross And The Supremes sang *Someday We'll Be Together*. After the performance, the camera cut to Sullivan who informed the audience that Ross was leaving the group to pursue a solo career.

The Supremes: (L-R) Diana Ross, Florence Ballard and Mary Wilson

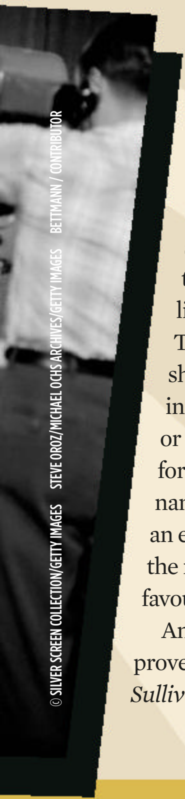
Bill Haley and His Comets perform on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, 7 August 1955





AN AVERAGE EPISODE OF THE SHOW MIGHT INCLUDE A COUPLE OF STAND-UPS, JUGGLERS, MAGICIANS, A PUPPET ACT, A CROONER, AS WELL AS SOME JUKEBOX FAVOURITE

Elvis and band at rehearsals for their September '56 appearance



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speech is frequently lost in a thicket of syntax; his eyes pop from their sockets or sink so deep in their bags that they seem to be peering up at the camera from the bottom of twin wells."

Yet audiences loved him.

Though the programme was titled *Toast Of The Town*, the public simply referred to it as *The Ed Sullivan Show*, a nickname that stuck so much it was officially renamed that in 1955. Over the course of its life, it never really changed its format. Templated like an old-time vaudeville show, an average episode might include a couple of stand-ups, jugglers or magicians, acrobats, a puppet act for the kids (a little mouse character named Topo Gigio was a regular), an easy listening crooner and – from the mid-50s at least – some jukebox favourite for the teens.

And it's these music acts that have proved the lasting legacy of *The Ed Sullivan Show*. According to the official Ed Sullivan website, it's not Topo Gigio, Rodney Dangerfield or Stiller & Meara who command the most amount of online streams, it's Elvis Presley performing *Hound Dog* (53.8 million) and *Don't Be Cruel* (47.6 million), and Ike & Tina Turner belting out *Proud Mary* (47.5 million). His show launched so many careers that one journalist recently posed the question, "Why isn't Ed Sullivan in the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame?"

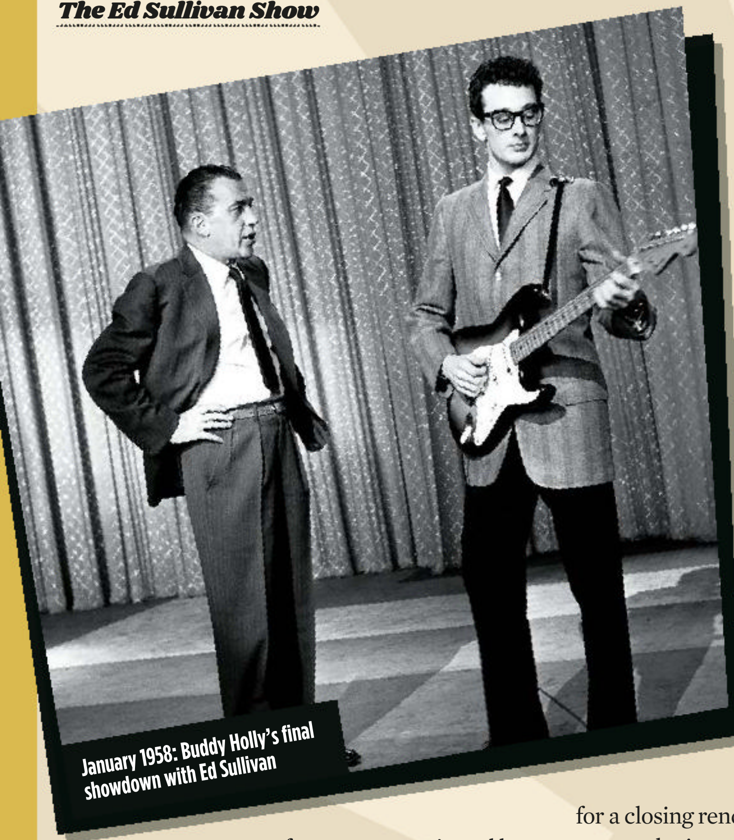
One of the first rock'n'roll acts to appear on *The Ed Sullivan Show* was Bill Haley who, along with his Comets, performed a juiced-up version of *Rock Around The Clock* in August 1955. It wasn't long after, however, that the programme booked its first Black rock'n'roller in Bo Diddley – though his appearance would prove, for this artist at least, a one-off.

It was on 20 November 1955 that the guitarist, who'd only released his first disc, *Bo Diddley/I'm A Man*, earlier that year, was booked to appear. According to reports, Diddley had agreed to sing the Tennessee Ernie Ford standard *Sixteen Tons* on the show, only to change his mind shortly before he was due on camera. His decision to perform the longer *Diddley Daddy* instead meant a panicked rearranging of the show, with producers forced to cut the two acts preceding the singer.

In his autobiography, *Living Legend*, Diddley alleged that Sullivan barked at him: "You are the first Black boy that ever double crossed me! I'll see that you never work no more in showbusiness. You'll never get another TV show in your life!"

Though the programme had been generally encouraging of rock'n'roll, Sullivan himself was initially unenthusiastic about booking Elvis Presley, simply stating, "He is not my cup of tea." But after Presley's appearance on Steve Allen's NBC show had trounced Sullivan in the ratings, the host relented. Except, when Elvis did eventually appear on 9 September 1956, it wasn't Sullivan who would introduce him. A few weeks earlier the presenter had been involved in a near-fatal car accident and was still recuperating at the time Presley's episode aired (Elvis sent him a get well card and photo, autographed to 'Mr Ed Sullivan'). Instead, Charles Laughton, the rotund British star of *Mutiny On The Bounty*, was booked to host the show, much to Elvis' delight. Anticipation was so high for Presley's appearance that rival network NBC decided not to air Allen's show that night, opting for a movie instead.

Elvis played two sets on that inaugural appearance – *Don't Be Cruel* and *Love Me Tender* then *Ready Teddy* as well as a truncated version of *Hound Dog*. Presley's ➡



January 1958: Buddy Holly's final showdown with Ed Sullivan

performance was viewed by over 60 million people that evening which represented a staggering 82.6% share of the available television audience.

Elvis' booking had proved such a ratings smash that a second appearance was a given. He returned just seven weeks later on 28 October '56, playing a largely similar set, starting with *Don't Be Cruel* and *Love Me Tender* before launching into *Love Me* and *Hound Dog* (this time a four-minute version). In his intro, Sullivan commended the teenagers in the audience on their composure and asked them not to scream during the performance. As a sign of how respected Sullivan was, the assembled crowd dutifully complied.

Elvis' third and final turn for Sullivan occurred on 6 January 1957, where he performed a medley of *Hound Dog*, *Love Me Tender* and *Heartbreak Hotel*, followed by a full version of *Don't Be Cruel*, and – for his second set – *Too Much* and *When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again* before returning for a closing rendition of *Peace In The Valley*.

Introducing Presley, Sullivan went out of his way to lavish praise on the rock'n'roller ("Oh, I wish I was young again, it's wonderful to be that way!"), while acknowledging this would be the singer's last time on the show – for now, at least. After the King's performance of *Peace In The Valley*, Sullivan walked up and put his arm around Presley's shoulder. "Elvis, ladies and gentlemen," the host said, "this will be the last time that we'll run into each other for a while. But I want to say to Elvis Presley and the country that this is a real decent, fine boy, and whenever you go, Elvis, we want to say that we've never had a pleasanter experience on our show with a big name than we've had with you. So now let's have a tremendous hand for a very nice person!"

If everything seemed congenial to the viewers at home, it didn't look that way to Presley who complained during an interview in 1969 about the camera crew only shooting him from the waist up.

Another of the rock'n'roll greats, Buddy Holly And The Crickets, would make two appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, starting on 1 December 1957, fresh off the release of their debut album. Looking pleasingly smart in bow ties and sports coats, the band essayed two songs, *That'll Be The Day* and *Peggy Sue*. The subsequent success of the latter (it would peak at No.3 on the Billboard chart) led to a second booking just two months later.

The Crickets were down to perform two songs, though Sullivan wasn't keen on them doing *Oh, Boy!* and asked them to replace it with a less raucous number. Holly, however, was adamant. Having turned up to rehearsal on his own, Sullivan asked him where the other Crickets were. "I don't know. No telling," Holly shrugged. "I guess The Crickets are not too excited to

On set with the Fab Four during filming of their first appearance

Paul, John and Ringo in rehearsal pre-show

The Beatles' record-breaking *Ed Sullivan* debut in February 1964

IF SULLIVAN THOUGHT HE'D WON BIG WITH ELVIS' FIRST APPEARANCE, IT WAS NOTHING NEXT TO THE DEBUT PERFORMANCE OF THE BEATLES

be on *The Ed Sullivan Show*?" the host said. "I hope they're damn more excited than I am," replied Holly.

An enraged Sullivan cut the Crickets' act from two songs to one and, intentionally or not, mispronounced Holly's surname in his introduction. The band played *Oh, Boy!* but the line feed for Holly's electric guitar had been turned off, at whose insistence we can only guess. When the show asked Buddy and the Crickets back for a third time, Holly simply told them they couldn't afford him.

While *The Ed Sullivan Show* gave a mostly inclusive, if sometimes disgruntled, platform to that first generation of rock'n'rollers, it also helped usher in the second generation. The British Invasion, as it was, likely wouldn't have happened had CBS's premier variety show not been so welcoming.

If Sullivan thought he'd won big with Elvis' first appearance, it was nothing next to The Beatles' debut on 9 February 1964. A record-breaking 73 million Americans tuned in to see John, Paul, George and Ringo blast through *All My Loving*, *Till There Was You* and *She Loves You*, to ear-splitting screams from the audience (the show had received 50,000 ticket requests for the 728-seat studio). During the second song, the show flashed up name captions for each Beatle as he appeared, with John's name getting an extra 'Sorry girls, he's married' line below it. The Fabs returned later in the show, after Sullivan jokingly admonished the audience for shrieking ("If you don't keep quiet, I'm going to send for a barber"), for an encore of *I Saw Her Standing There* and *I Want to Hold Your Hand*.

The Beatles were lined up for the next two episodes of *The Ed Sullivan Show* and again on 24 May '64 (though this fourth appearance would be a taped interview and a pre-recorded version of *You Can't Do That*). Their final performance was recorded on 14 August 1965 and broadcast 12 September, with a setlist of *I Feel Fine*, *I'm Down*, *Act Naturally*, *Ticket To Ride*, *Yesterday* and *Help!*. Though they never performed at Studio 50 again, they did lens a series of promo clips to air exclusively on the show, including videos for *Paperback Writer*, *Rain*, *Penny Lane*, *Strawberry Fields Forever* and *Hello, Goodbye*.

The Beatles' appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* remain some of the

➨

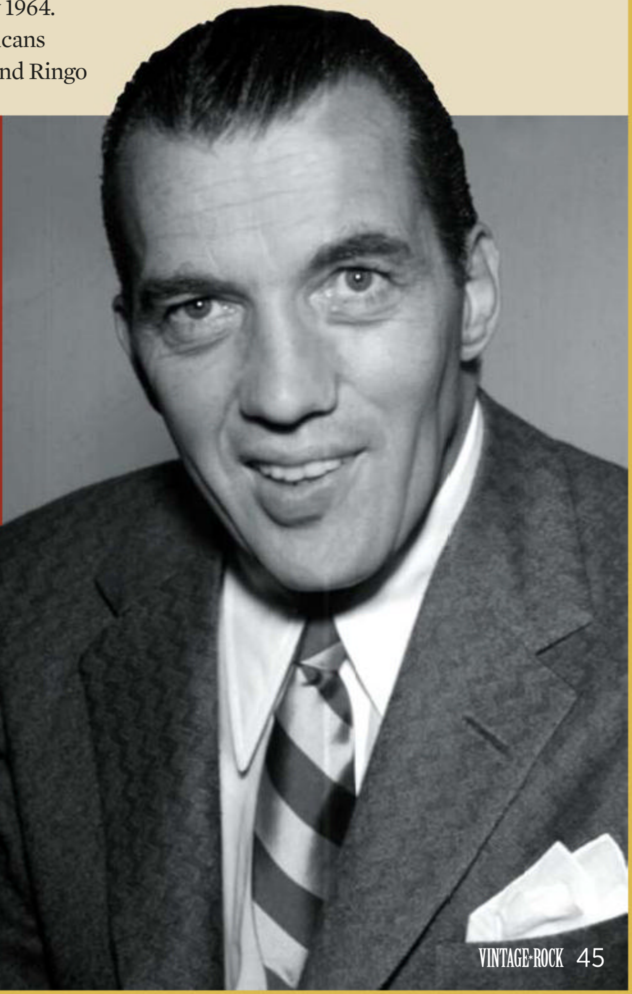
THE HOST WITH THE MOST

Born in 1901 in Harlem, Ed Sullivan was a sports and entertainment reporter and a syndicated columnist for the *New York Daily News* before breaking into broadcasting. It was in 1941 that he got the gig hosting *Summer Silver Theater*, a variety show broadcast on CBS. This, in turn, would lead to him being offered the job presenting an altogether more ambitious TV programme, *Toast Of The Town*, which began in 1948. The show would make him one of the most famous men in North America.

CBS Studio 50, where *Toast Of The Town* (later *The Ed Sullivan Show*) was broadcast from 1953 until 1971, was renamed The Ed Sullivan Theater in 1967. To this day, it's still the home to one of America's top entertainment programmes – *The Late Show* has been filmed there since 1993, first with David Letterman and now with its current host, Stephen Colbert.

After *The Ed Sullivan Show* was axed in 1971, Sullivan's health deteriorated. Paul McCartney recalled meeting Sullivan in the early 70s and the host not remembering who he was. In an interview with Howard Stern around 2012, comedian Joan Rivers claimed that Sullivan had been suffering from dementia in the last years of his life.

Sullivan was diagnosed with an advanced stage of esophageal cancer in early September 1974, with doctors giving him just weeks to live. He died on 13 October 1974 at the age of 73.



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Glad All Over: The Dave Clark Five play *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1965

most viewed music performances in television history. In terms of percentage of America's population, those first two shows from February '64 remain the highest-viewed regularly scheduled TV programmes of all time.

The Fab Four were just one of many British beat bands to guest on Sullivan's stage in the 60s. On 8 March '64, The Dave Clark Five sang *Glad All Over* on the show. This song was the first of 15 consecutive US Top 40 singles for the group, who had developed a fanatical following across the pond. The DC5 would end up appearing a total of 12 times on the show, with Sullivan at one point telling the audience, "Look, kids, we've got The Dave Clark Five on tonight. Now I don't mind if you carry on when they come out, but remember there are other acts on the bill!"

Of course, with The Beatles having appeared, it was inevitable The Rolling Stones would follow suit and Mick Jagger and co made their first appearance on 25 October '64. However, Sullivan was no fan of the band and of the near-hysterical reaction they brought out in his audience (at one point the group's fans shrieked through his interview with Jagger and through the introduction of his next guest). "I promise you they'll never be back on our show," Sullivan said. "It took me 17 years to build this show and I'm not going to have it destroyed in a matter of weeks." When Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham tried to change the host's mind, he received an unsparing response: "We were deluged with mail protesting the untidy appearance – clothes and hair of your Rolling Stones. Before even discussing the possibility of a contract, I would like to learn from you, whether your young men have reformed in the matter of dress and shampoo."

Sullivan eventually relented (though with no sign that the Stones had re-evaluated their relationship with Head & Shoulders) and the bad boys of rock'n'roll would return for a number of performances on the show through the 1960s, though it's their final appearance on 15 January 1967 that has gone down in infamy. Scheduled to perform the song *Let's Spend The Night Together*, a jittery CBS demanded that Jagger change the lyric to "Let's spend some time together." After the band baulked, Sullivan issued them an ultimatum: "Either the song goes, or you go."

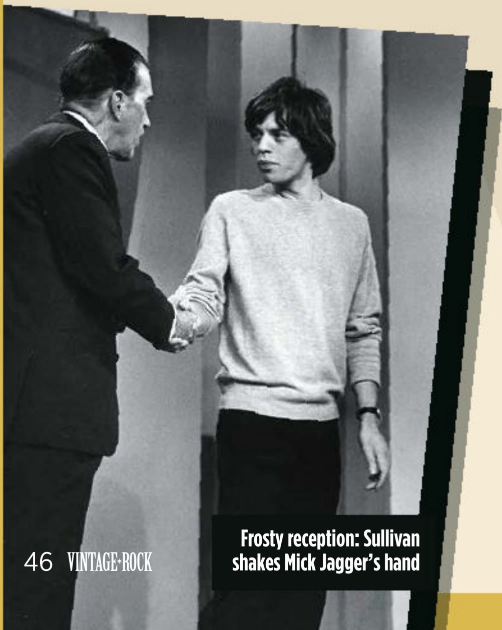
When the band played the song live, Jagger dutifully sang the altered line, but with an exasperated roll of the eyes, a subtle act of rebellion, admittedly, but one that still annoyed CBS as the next week, when they replayed the Stones' performance of *Ruby Tuesday* from that 15 January episode, but pointedly not *Let's Spend The Night Together*.

As *The Ed Sullivan Show* entered the late 60s, it continued to shine a light on all types of music, from the sun-dappled pop of The Mamas And The Papas and dark, acid-fuelled rock of The Doors to the proto-disco fizz of The Jackson Five.

However, its days were numbered. Dwindling audience figures and a haemorrhaging of advertising revenue caused CBS to pull the plug and the final episode aired on 28 March 1971.

The Ed Sullivan Show lasted 23 years, yet the America it reflected at the time of its demise was almost unrecognisable from the one at its inception. Which is why its archives are among the most culturally valuable in US television. Through its clips we can see the country – and indeed the world – changing in front of our eyes.

No other TV programme in history can boast the rich rock'n'roll archive of *The Ed Sullivan Show*, because, at a time when most mainstream media were running scared of this voltaic new artform, he embraced it and gave it the largest of platforms. For that alone, he's an honorary member of the *Vintage Rock* Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. ✶



Frosty reception: Sullivan shakes Mick Jagger's hand

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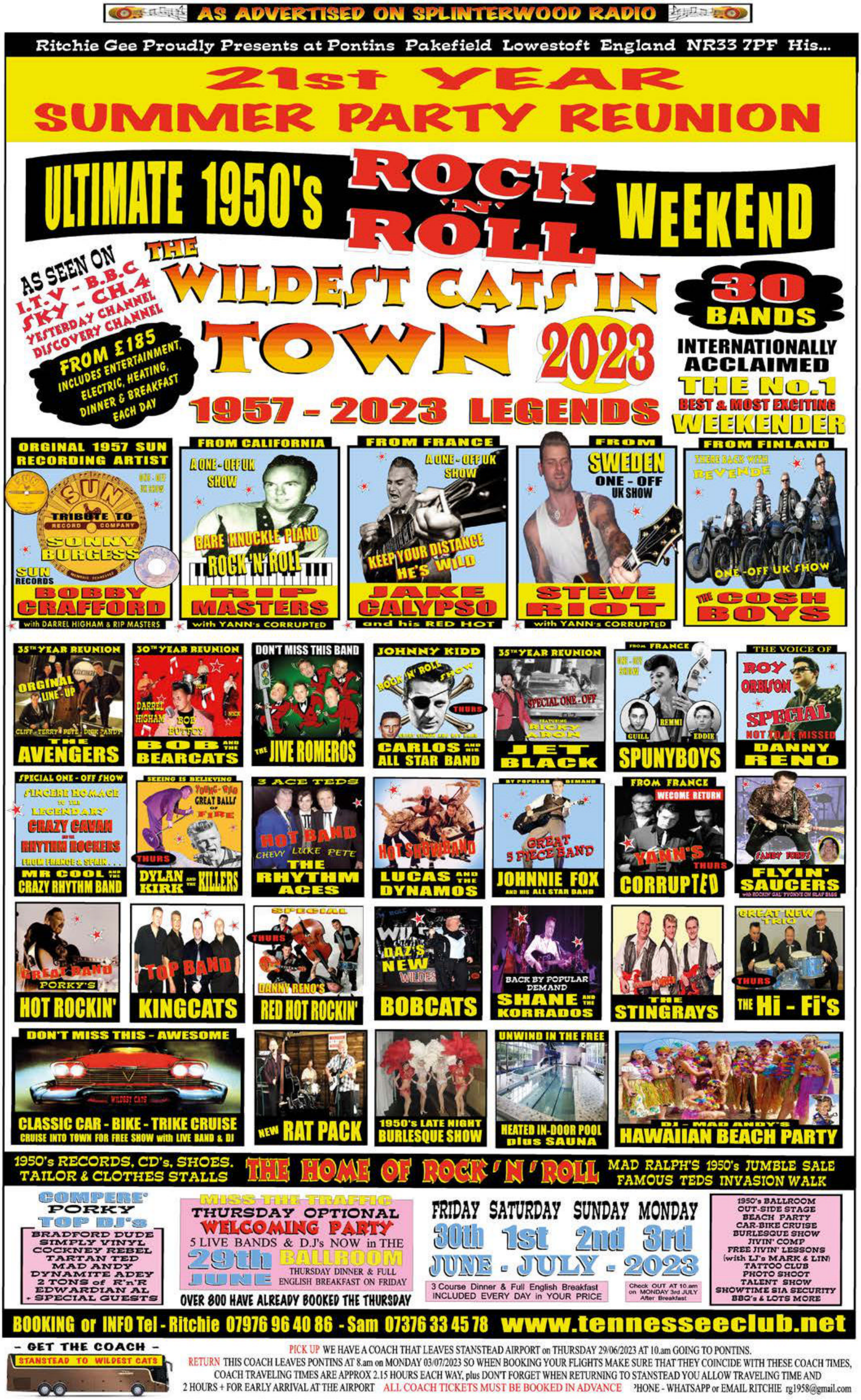

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Johnny Kidd sporting his trademark eyepatch

Rock 'n' Roll Heroes

JOHNNY KIDD & THE PIRATES

We revisit the early days of the singer and band who are forever remembered for their all-time British rock'n'roll classic, *Shakin' All Over*

WORDS BY **JACK WATKINS**

In the story of British rock, Johnny Kidd & The Pirates often seem to disappear into a hole between early pacemakers like Tommy Steele, Cliff Richard, Marty Wilde and the arrival of The Beatles. Equally, if you Google *Shakin' All Over*, which was a No.1 smash in 1960 and gave Kidd by far his biggest hit, The Who's later version from their *Live At Leeds* album is as likely to be the first link that comes up.

Adding to the injustice, the original has often been referred to without due credit given to the Pirates' personnel at the time of the recording. The most high-profile guitarist who played in the Pirates was Mick Green. Great as he was, however, he was a later member of the band between 1962 and 1964. For lovers of a vintage rock sound, the classic line-up comprises guitarist Alan Caddy, bass player Brian Gregg and drummer Clem Cattini, from the 1960-61 period. These were Kidd's first truly decibel-mangling power trio, noted for playing very loud during their gigs to compensate for the lack of a rhythm guitarist, although recording technology of the time didn't always convey this actuality on disc.

Near the end of 1961 the trio would leave Kidd, first touring with Tommy Steele's brother Colin Hicks, and then operating as Joe Meek's house band, which went on to enjoy commercial success from 1962-63 as the instrumental group The Tornados. But before all that they had played a major part in the creation of the Johnny Kidd & The Pirates sound, and in their distinctive stage image, appearing in pirate regalia. With Kidd wearing an eyepatch and swirling his cutlass, and the band in similarly buccaneering attire – before Screaming Lord Sutch, David Bowie and Adam Ant – they were pioneering theatrical British rock'n'roll.

Despite his in-between-the-years status, Kidd was actually senior to most of the early British rockers. Born in Willesden, north-west London, in 1935, he cut his musical teeth on skiffle. Freddie Heath, as he was originally known, made a couple of demos with one of his early groups, The Five Nutters, in 1957 (included on a four-track 10" vinyl release, *A Fabulous Freddie Heath Double Bill*, put out by the jazz label Moochin' About in 2017). The two skiffle sides were a version of *Shake Rattle & Roll* and the Heath original, *She's My Blood Red Beauty*, inspired by the singer's first wife Ada. Heath's group played at the top London skiffle venue of the time, Soho's 2i's Coffee Bar. That Soho skiffle connection would resurface a few years later in the creation of *Shakin' All Over*, its composition worked up by Kidd, Caddy and Gregg in the basement of the Freight Train Coffee Bar, owned and run by Chas McDevitt and named after the great skiffler's biggest hit (see boxout). Even in his Freddie Heath days, Kidd fancied himself as a songwriter and his first single comprised two self-penned sides, *Please Don't Touch* and *Growl*, released on EMI's His Master's Voice label in 1959. This marked the first appearance on a disc of the moniker, Johnny Kidd & The Pirates, apparently arrived at when, on concluding the recording session, an EMI staffer handed the band a note which read simply "Johnny Kidd & the Pirates" and bluntly informed them, "From now on, that's your recording name."

Three things are notable about *Please Don't Touch*, aside from the fact that it managed a highly respectable No.25 chart placing, and would later be recorded by Matchbox for their 1976 album *Riders In The Sky*, and Motörhead on their big-selling *St Valentine's Day Massacre* EP in 1980 with Girlschool. The first is that Kidd doesn't disguise his London accent, at a time when most British rockers affected an American delivery. Tommy Steele never hid his Britishness, but often sang in an exaggeratedly Cockney way, whereas the way Kidd delivers lines like, "Well, I don't know why she dug her claws in me/ I wanna be a bachelor and fancy free"

© GEMS/REDFERNS/GETTY

sound totally natural. Soon, The Beatles would make the Scouse accent cool but on *Please Don't Touch* Kidd was already demonstrating that sounding British was no disqualification for singing convincing rock'n'roll.

The second thing is the rueful tone of Johnny's voice. When most rock'n'roll songs talked about the opposite sex it was in admiration or fun but here was Johnny "shakin' like a leaf" and begging his girl not to touch him. The common theme of all the great Kidd originals of the 1960 to 1961 era was this slightly gloomy tone, on *Feelin'*, *Shakin' All Over*, *Restless* and *Please Don't Bring Me Down*, supported by the strangely isolating echo effects, and eerie minor chords. The third point is the jangly lead guitar playing of Alan Caddy, recognisably the man who would devise the unforgettable lead guitar riffs of *Shakin' All Over*, and later the shimmering solo on The Tornados' *Telstar*.

Caddy's guitar was also distinctive on another fine Kidd rocker, *Feelin'*, on which poor old Johnny complained that his girlfriend was turning his knees to jelly. Incredibly, that song was relegated to the B-side of *If You Were The Only Girl In The World*. Bert Weedon played guitar on this one, well sung by Kidd to be fair, albeit with backing flown in direct from Squaresville. It made no impression on record buyers.

The Tornados: (clockwise, left-right) Heinz Burt, Roger LaVern, Alan Caddy, Clem Cattini and George Bellamy

Johnny and the Pirates at Hamburg's Star Club

Not long after, however, the final members of the classic early Pirates line-up arrived in the shape of Gregg and Cattini, both having just quit working for Larry Parnes, as members of Billy Fury's Blue Flames. At first, they were wary of Caddy, who turned up at their audition in Denmark Street dressed more like an estate agent than a rock guitarist. In his early live performances, shyness had made Alan play with his back to the audience. Nevertheless, as he developed, this classically trained musician made an impression, and his habit of windmilling his arms above his guitar is said to have influenced Pete Townshend.

Caddy's ability to combine playing lead guitar with chunky rhythm chords – necessitated by the need to fill out the band's sound when rhythm guitarist Frank Routledge opted out of life on the road – as well as Cattini's powerhouse drumming and the electric bass of Gregg who used his thumb rather than a plectrum to give his playing a deeper and more forceful quality than was common at the time, made the Pirates unique.

A Spontaneous Classic

SO WHAT?!
THE BRITS ARE ROCKING
Johnny Kidd

Shakin' All Over, worked up in a few inspired minutes, is a perfect example of how rock'n'roll is best when spontaneous. Having travelled back from a gig and dropped Clem Cattini off at his North London home, Johnny Kidd, Alan Caddy and Brian Gregg sat down on some crates and began working from a bass run which had been playing in Gregg's mind. Caddy improvised a sparkling opening riff, part inspired by Cliff and the Shadows' *Move It*. Kidd's lyric drew on a saying of the band's former rhythm guitarist Frank Routledge, a mate from Kidd's Willesden days, when spotting a pretty girl, "She gives me quivers down the membrane." At EMI's Studio 2 next morning, Caddy, always nervous in the studio, had an anxiety attack, and went out and got his friend Joe Moretti a young Glaswegian guitarist who'd played on Vince Taylor's *Brand New Cadillac*. But it was Caddy who showed him the intro riff, and who played the haunting, rhythm sound which followed Gregg's bassline in a higher octave. With Cattini's drums well mic'ed, and assistant producer Pete O'Sullivan demanding the sound engineer set the controls to full tape echo and full echo chamber, a classic was born. Bear Family Records has just released *Johnny Kidd: So What?!* as the seventh volume in their *The Brits Are Rocking* series. The 34-track CD covers the spectrum of Kidd's career with the Pirates, including the original seven-piece line-up, the *Shakin' All Over* era, and the Mick Green, Johnny Spence and Frank Farley years, as well as early BBC radio performances. It's accompanied by a 36-page booklet.

The first single the new line-up played on together was a cover of early Motown star Marv Johnson's *You Got What It Takes*, backed by Kidd's own *Longin' Lips*, which fans might find they prefer. Only a moderate hit, HMV's idea of the next single was the trad-jazz favourite *Yes Sir, That's My Baby*, to the band's horror. At least they were allowed to come up with the B-side. That happened to be *Shakin' All Over*, which luckily the company recognised was the superior side and which, with the help of guest guitarist Joe Moretti, made history.

Kidd reckoned the follow-up single, *Restless*, was an even better song, and it certainly has another great guitar solo, Moretti's playing seeming to explode out of the middle of the track. They were disappointed when it only got to No.22 in the UK. *Please Don't Bring Me Down*, the last of the melancholy, echoey early Kidd rockin' classics, released in 1961, boasted Big Jim Sullivan playing the lead guitar but it entirely failed to chart.

After the departure of Caddy, Gregg and Cattini, key members of the Pirates would include Green, Johnny Spence on bass and drummer Frank Farley. Kidd would record more R&B-style material, and score one last big hit with *I'll Never Get Over You* (UK No.4 in 1963), a solid stab at Merseybeat. A vastly better effort in the style, even though it didn't chart, was the superb *Jealous Girl*, which carried something of that sad and rather wistful tone that had helped make those earlier Kidd songs so distinctive. Johnny Kidd's end was tragic and sudden, killed in a car crash in 1966, but his musical legacy and that unique visual image remain to be treasured. ✶

Got what it takes: Johnny Kidd photographed in 1962

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Diamonds

JET HARRIS AND TONY MEEHAN

DECCA (1963)

Featuring not only two former members of The Shadows but two future Led Zeppelin members, *Diamonds* gave us one of the greatest instrumental singles of the 1960s

WORDS BY
STEVE O'BRIEN

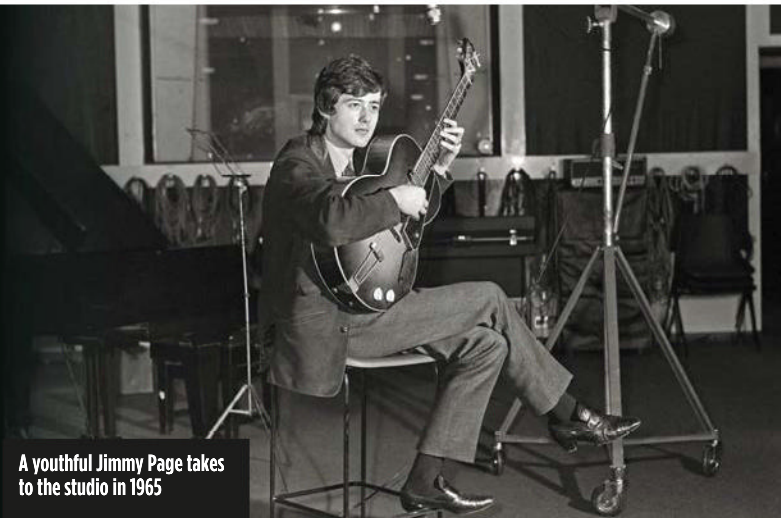
Tony Meehan and Jet Harris on the set of *Ready Steady Go!* at Television House in London

For Jet Harris on 31 January 1963, the taste of victory must have been especially sweet. It had been nine months since he'd split from The Shadows, reportedly due to Bruce Welch's unhappiness with his drinking, and the bassist had already enjoyed two solo successes – a cover of *Bésame Mucho* (UK No.22) and his version of the theme from *The Man With The Golden Arm* (UK No.12).

Diamonds, his third single and first alongside former Shadows buddy Tony Meehan was different, though. Not only was it his first No.1, but it knocked his old band off the top spot after just one week. When you listen to *Dance On!* alongside *Diamonds*, it only highlights what Cliff Richard's former backing band lost when they let Harris (and indeed Meehan) go.

© CA/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES ALAMY

DECCA
45 RPM
45-F 11563
DIAMONDS
(Lordan)
JET & TONY
HARRIS MEEHAN
Music Director & Producer:
Tony Meehan


A youthful Jimmy Page takes to the studio in 1965

Dance On! is a fine, if rather well-behaved record, but it sounds desperately old-fashioned next to *Diamonds*.

Harris' moody, Duane Eddy-echoing guitar and that explosion of brass halfway through feel like something ripped from a Sergio Leone Western. If *Dance On!* was the sound of instrumentals past, *Diamonds* was its future.

Jet Harris is one of the great nearly-men of rock'n'roll, a titanically talented bassist sadly undone by a crippling addiction to alcohol. Born Terence Harris on 6 July 1939, he acquired his nickname at school due to his prowess as a sprinter.

His interest in music was there from an early age, and he'd even made his own four-string double bass as a teenager ("dreadful to look at, but I developed strong wrists," he told *Vintage Rock*'s Alan Clayson back in 2009).

After quitting his job as a trainee welder, Harris played in a succession of jazz outfits. He then joined The Vipers Skiffle Group, a band that had assembled around London's 2i's coffee bar, and which counted Hank Marvin and Meehan among its members.

When the group split, Harris played with the Most Brothers (Blighty's answer to Phil and Don) before crossing paths once more with Marvin, who, alongside Cliff and guitarist Bruce Welch, had formed a new group, The Drifters. Harris duly joined his former bandmate and suggested Meehan as their drummer.

It was also Harris that dreamed up the name. When American vocal group The Drifters threatened legal action, Harris put forward some new suggestions, including The Zephyrs, The Zodiacs, The Lions and The Tigers. "When I said Shadows," he recalled, "Hank shouted, 'That's it!'"

With The Shadows, Harris and Meehan enjoyed several chart wins including *Apache*, *Kon-Tiki* (UK No.1) and *FBI* (UK No.6). But despite their success, Meehan was itching to branch out and in October '61, he became a producer at Decca Records, with Harris following him in April 1962. Given their history and the fact that, after leaving The Shadows, Harris signed with Decca, it was inevitable that the two would end up working together once more. *Diamonds* was the first of three collaborations between the powerhouse rhythm section – and their most successful.

The track was written by Jerry Lordan, who had also penned *Apache*, The Shadows' first No.1 without Cliff, and *Wonderful Land* (their last No.1 before *Dance On!*). Recorded in November at Decca Studios, *Diamonds* has a place in history for being the first record that future Led Zeppelin axe hero Jimmy Page played on. Not yet 20, Page was a student at Sutton Art College, but after a gig at London's Marquee Club, word got out how remarkable this young player was and he'd soon received a request to play for Harris and Meehan.

It's Harris who handles the electric guitar on *Diamonds*, using a detuned Fender Jaguar, while Page is on acoustic rhythm. *Diamonds* is also a landmark 45 in that it features Page's future bandmate John Paul Jones (then John Baldwin) on bass, marking the first time the two had recorded together. With two former Shadows at one end and two future Led Zeppelin members at the other, *Diamonds* really was the past and the future of rock'n'roll in one electrifying record.

> Harris' Duane Eddy-echoing guitar and that explosion of brass make it sound like something from a Sergio Leone Western. If Dance On! was the sound of instrumentals past, Diamonds was its future.

Diamonds would hold the No.1 for three weeks leading the duo to release two more platters, *Scarlett O'Hara* (also by Jerry Lordan) which peaked at No.2, and *Applejack*, a UK No.4.

The duo then parted and, after forming – then swiftly splitting – The Jet Harris Band, and a one-day stint in The Jeff Beck Group ("I went to one rehearsal in a room above a Tottenham Court Road pub," Jet recalled. "Then we went down to the bar, and that was the end of that"), Harris walked away from showbiz.

In the years after, he worked as a bricklayer, window cleaner and sold cockles, noble professions all – but not what someone as gifted as Jet should have been doing.

After ditching the booze, Harris enjoyed a renaissance in the 80s, reuniting with Meehan to support Cliff at Wembley in 1989, "the highlight of [his] life."

Meehan left music in the 90s and retrained as a psychologist before his death in 2005, while Harris toured in the 00s in a show titled *Me And My Shadows*. Sadly, he died in 2011.

Diamonds remains the duo's crowning achievement, so revered that even their old band eventually took it on. That said, The Shadows' glossed-up 1983 version doesn't hold a candle to the original, which still stands as one of the most thrilling instrumentals of all time. ✶

2023 THE YEAR AHEAD

We highlight the festivals, live shows and new releases that need to be on your rockin' radar across the next 12 months, plus some top tips from artists in the know

WORDS BY **CRAIG BRACKENRIDGE**

After a period of relative post-lockdown 'normality', alarming affairs in Europe, tightening purse strings, a Christmas football bonanza and the sad passing of Jerry Lee Lewis and Robert Gordon, things in the rock'n'roll world keep rollin' and in 2023 there's a lot to look forward to.

Reissue projects are still uncovering hidden gems that are reaching our ears after decades in the dark and newly-recorded material is also available in abundance. At live music events people seem to be partying with renewed vigour after only bouncing around their living rooms for the best part of 2020 and, while it remains a mystery as to what type of mystical force is creating so much fresh, youthful talent in the rockabilly world, there are plenty of vibrant new artists and bands out there who are hitting the road soon alongside a stack of more established favourites.

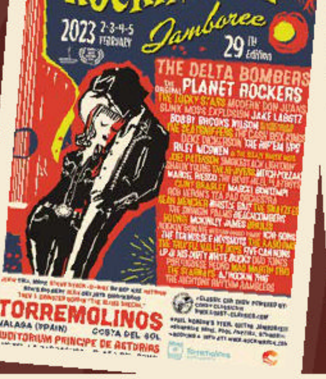
WORLD WEEKENDERS

As usual, The Rockin' Race Jamboree (2-5 February) is one of the first major gatherings of the year and their 29th event offers a mindbending array of talent in Torremolinos. Alongside performances from The Planet Rockers – playing their last ever show – and The Delta Bombers, Clint Bradley and Deke Dickerson, there is a seemingly endless list of other acts to enjoy. However, the fun doesn't stop there as alongside the pool parties and car shows there's also a new Rockin' Race beer brewed exclusively for the event.

Staying in Europe, Wild Records pack more than 20 bands into a heavyweight two-day programme at their second ever WILDest Weekender (3-4 March). Located in a Netherlands sweetspot between Eindhoven and Venlo, you can savour the delights of Elvis Cantu, The Pendletons, The Silhouettes, Rampage and many more.

The big daddy of them all reaches its 66th gathering this year and the Hemsby Rock'n'Roll Weekender (9-13 March) has an international buffet of delights available including Jimmy Dale & The Beltline and Gizzelle jetting over from the States, Jack Baymoore & The Bandits from

➡



2023's Rockin' Race will be fuelled with their own brew

The ORLEANS

Red Hot Vegas will be staged at the Orleans Hotel in Las Vegas this October

35 years in the business and Big Sandy will be rockin' the Rave

Sweden and MFC Chicken, Tex Speed Combo, The Blasting Caps to name just a few. You don't get to this number of engagements without doing something right and this will no doubt already be marked in thick red ink on the calendars of many.

Where all the psychobillies lurk during the rest of the year is unknown but it's a dead certainty most of them will be in Northampton for the Bedlam Breakout (10-12 March). There's plenty on the bill for the wreckers, including Demented Are Go, Batmobile and The Coffin Nails but, as ever, Bedlam offers a wide range of styles from the roughhouse rockabilly of The Hurricanes and The Sabrejets to the garage-tinged tones of Oh! Gunquit and The Masonics.

If you really want to kick the year off in style, Viva Las Vegas Rockabilly Weekend #26 (27-30 April) offers a veritable feast of entertainment and, with its additional delights such as car shows, weddings and dance classes, the music is only part of the experience. If it's still 'all about the bands' for you then there's plenty to get excited about including Dale Watson, Dollar Bill, Charlie Hightone and the always outrageous Jane Rose & The Deadend Boys.

Promoter Tom Ingram also takes the 'Viva' brand into further dimensions in 2023 with Viva Jamaica (16-23 August) at the 'adult only' Hedonism II resort in Negril and a brand new weekender, Red Hot Vegas, (13-14 October) staged in the gambling mecca's Orleans Hotel.

FIVE TO WATCH IN 2023

LA PERRA BLANCO

LA PERRA BLANCO
WON'T YOU COME ON
folc

This wild lady from La Línea, Spain, has been something of a well-kept secret but it's hard to believe that her raucous sound and fierce performance style won't make a big impression in 2023. A quick scan through YouTube will give you all the proof you need and after only a low-key debut album, *Bop & Shake*, and a self-titled single, her 2022 EP for Folc Records, *Won't You Come On*, showcased a talent that's just too big to be ignored.

LOBO JONES & THE RHYTHM HOUNDS

Howlin'
Lobo Jones
&
The Rhythm Hounds
FootTapping
records

Announcing their arrival on the scene with a solid debut album, *Howlin'*, released on Foot Tapping Records, this band have already secured a spot at this year's Rockabilly Rave in June and many more dates in Europe. Lobo Jones himself has appeared on a solo 45 for Sleazy Records back in 2018 and featured with The Sirocco Bros on the 10" single *Bewitched*, but with the Hounds beside him things have taken a rowdier turn. Maintaining one of rock'n'roll's greatest traditions, this is the type of band who start a gig looking dapper and end in a sweaty mess. Wild!

RED HOT RIOT

Although they are far from the new kids on the block now – and were recommended on these very pages back in 2021 – these Forest of Dean rockers have soared to new heights. With a renewed sense of direction they've taken their unique brand of rockabilly to the masses including festival dates at Glastonbury and the Pineda Psychobilly Meeting as well as being fresh from a 14-date autumn tour and a recent trip to Sweden. As they keep rolling into 2023 it will be in the absence of rhythm guitarist Louis and drummer Dan, who have both moved on, but even with a new line-up continued success looks more than likely.

THE HURRICANES

These Scottish rockers had signed to US label Missing Fink before they even played a gig. Since making their first live appearance they have already supported The Jets, Slim Jim Phantom and Big Sandy. Peddling what they refer to as 'nitrous-fuelled' rockabilly they have a hint of Rev Horton Heat about them but still an original style. Their limited early releases are now long gone but there's still time to get a grip on their 2022 7", *Long Distance Bass*. Two new LPs and another 45 are already on the cards. Look out for them on the bill at Bedlam Breakout and Scotland's Rock'n'Roll Rampage #6 on 8 July.

THE GLAD RAGS

Featuring two gals, one guy and no drummer, this Italian trio specialise in a harmonic brand of stripped-down rockabilly that's a breath of fresh air and, after a series of gigs across Europe, they hit UK shores later in 2023 at The Rockabilly Rave then the Welsh Rockabilly Fair. A small number of their first CD EP *Introducing* are still available and a self-produced CD of mostly covers will appear before they get down to recording an all-original debut album later in the year.

Boasting a car show, burlesque, pool parties and technicolour fashion, Viva Las Vegas is a next-level music festival

Wild's roots renegades, The Delta Bombers, play the Rockin' Race

The Isaac Webb Trio – another must-see at the Rockabilly Rave

The Rockin Round-Up (2-4 June) reaches its seventh gathering down at Court Farm Country Park in Weston-Super-Mare and these three solid days of entertainment include the comeback of a revitalised Jack Rabbit Slim along with the likes of Dylan Kirk & The Killers, Red Hot Riot, Delta 88 and The Bullets.

A mere few weeks later it's time to take a trip down to Pontins in Camber Sands for the 25th Rockabilly Rave (15-19 June) and once again Mr Chatabox has nailed it with an expansive international line-up that includes Stateside representation in the form of Big Sandy, The Bellfuries and Marti Brom, thunder-from-down-under with Aussie acts Scotty Baker and The Hi-Boys, lots of European combos and a place for UK talent such as Toto & The Raw Deals, The Infernos and The Isaac Webb Trio.

TOM INGRAM TAKES THE 'VIVA' BRAND INTO FURTHER DIMENSIONS IN 2023 WITH VIVA JAMAICA AND RED HOT VEGAS

Spain's infamous Psychobilly Meeting (4-11 July) also hits 29 this year at Pineda de Mar and, as usual, the running order is a well-kept secret to be teased later in the year. Regardless, most folks make a regular pilgrimage there anyway and sign up for a punishing seven-day schedule of rock'n'roll naughtiness.

As autumn approaches there is still time for a trip to the seaside for the Welsh Rockabilly Fair (15-17 September) in Porthcawl. Promising more than 30 hours of rockin' music, a fairground and on-site camping, this event tempts The Go-Getters from Sweden and brings the very unique The Glad Rags out of Italy to play alongside lots of fine UK talent such as El Camino, Black Kat Boppers and The Sundown Boys.

Finally, if one night of rockin' at a time is more to your taste, keep an eye out in the spring for the announcement of a set of live dates from the recently revitalised Rockats.

Generally, it's great to see that live music has survived the lockdown and the uncertainty which followed in its wake – despite some smaller gigs suffering from low attendances and the odd cancellation, the larger gatherings now seem to be experiencing a new lease of life. Tobe Wright of the Bedlam Crew puts it a little more succinctly: "So far as we have seen, people seem to be gagging to be out at gigs again. It was slow off the blocks but in general I'd say people seem to be enjoying it like it could be their last night out."

NEW RELEASES

Once again, vinyl pressing issues caused more than a few problems across 2022 with release dates getting put back, occasionally put forward, and generally unpredictable across the year. CD production seems to be a safer bet for many and while the spectre of streaming ➨

NGELES
ATRE
AYING
ROADWAY

The Rhythm Shakers finally release their fourth album later this year

UP AND COMING

NEW RELEASES FOR 2023

1. THE BLUE CATS
EXPLORERS OF THE BEAT
(BLUELIGHT) LP/CD

2. JOE MEEK
I HEAR A NEW
WORLD SESSIONS
(CHERRY RED) 10" LP

3. JACK RABBIT SLIM
SERPENT SLIDE
(WESTERN STAR) LP/CD

4. JERRY LEE LEWIS
REMIXED IN STEREO
(SUN) LP

5. BATMOBILE
BRACE FOR IMPACT
(MUSIC ON VINYL) LP

6. VARIOUS ARTISTS
SAM PHILLIPS 100TH BIRTHDAY
COMPILATION (SUN) DOUBLE LP

7. CARL PERKINS
THE COMPLETE
COLUMBIA SINGLES
VOL. 1 & 2 (SLEAZY) LP

8. SHOWADDYWADDY
50TH ANNIVERSARY
ANTHOLOGY (DEMON)
5CD BOXSET

9. A TRIBUTE TO SCREAMING LORD SUTCH
DECAPITATE THE
ESTABLISHMENT
(WESTERN STAR) 10" LP

the Blue Cats
EXPLORERS OF THE BEAT

BOZ BOORER
BACK TO NEO
Sleazy

10. VARIOUS ARTISTS
THAT'LL FLAT GIT IT!
VOL. 43 (BEAR FAMILY) CD

11. HEINZ
SESSIONS (CHERRY RED)
5CD BOXSET

12. THE ISAAC WEBB TRIO
UNTITLED (WILD) CD

13. BOZ BOORER
BACK TO NEO
(SLEAZY) LP

14. BARNTWISTERS
UNTITLED (ALWAYS A HIT) CD

15. CHARLIE FEATHERS
ROCKS (BEAR FAMILY) CD

16. THE HURRICANES
ROAD TO RUIN (MISSING FINK)

17. THE RHYTHM SHAKERS
UNTITLED (WILD) LP

18. THE GLAD RAGS
UNTITLED DEBUT
(WESTERN STAR) 10"

19. HARRY AND THE HOUNDS
UNTITLED
(FOOT TAPPING) CD

20. BIG JOE TURNER
BLUES NO. 5
(BEAR FAMILY) 10" LP

Sleazy
1958-1960 The complete COLUMBIA singles - vol.1
Carl Perkins
JIVE AFTER FIVE

A TRIBUTE TO
Screaming Lord Sutch
DECAPITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT!

services lurks in the background, demand for physical formats seems to remain strong in the rock'n'roll universe.

How you feel about Record Store Day might depend on how keen you are to camp outside record shops, but with RSD 2022 Elvis titles STILL available in large quantities at reasonable prices, this event may be something of a damp squib for rockin' fans. Nevertheless, it's still intriguing to find out what lies ahead and as this year's event is scheduled for 22 April, proposed titles should be leaking out soon.

On a positive note, Cherry Red continue their mammoth task of working through those legendary, mostly unheard, Joe Meek Tea Chest Tapes. Next in line is a selection of finely remastered material from Heinz, Glenda Collins and the sessions that produced Meek's bonkers space opera, *I Hear A New World*. As the label always intended, there will be no 'smash and grab' run through this important collection of recordings for just the big names. Progress is measured but they do promise more Meek material will be available across the year.

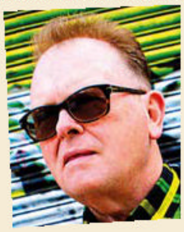
After celebrating their 70th Anniversary in 2022, Sun Records will continue to push the titles released across the landmark year

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Boz Boorer reboots the revival with new studio album *Back To Neo* – we review it on page 80

ONES TO WATCH

HOT TIPS FOR 2023



CLINT BRADLEY (THE BLUE CATS)

"I think Red Hot Riot have the juice, I really loved their set at Pineda. They have it going on live for sure. I watched their whole set and thoroughly enjoyed it! They have their own identity and deserve to be moving up the ladder."

BRETT WATERS (THE BULLETS/JACK RABBIT SLIM)

"Toto & The Raw Deals are ripping up the rockabilly scene. They're a really exciting band to hear and watch. They're all young, wild, talented and full of energy. If you want screamin' rockabilly, this band has it just oozing from their rockin' bones. A class act for sure!"

PHILIP DOYLE (DIABLO RECORDS)

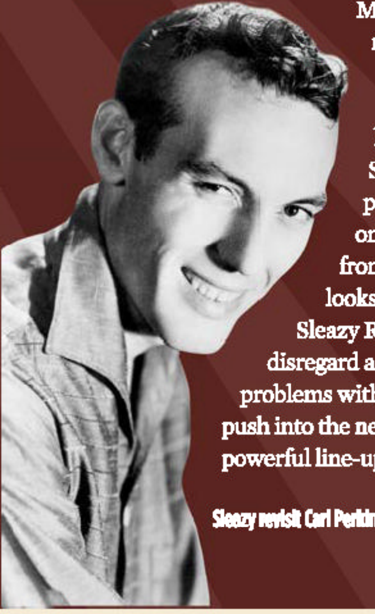
"I reckon King Cat Rhythm from Budapest will do well and they're all between 17 and 25. They are an up-and-coming new young band that needs to be heard. When you've had enough of *Radio Sweetheart* then check these guys out!"

BOB BUTFOY (JACK RABBIT SLIM)

"Although he's established himself over the last few years, Dylan Kirk is a young exciting artist and there's really no one else like him on the scene. He's cornered that pumpin' piano style and made it his own. I see he's already booked for Viva Las Vegas in 2023, so the sky's the limit for him."

throughout 2023, while they also keep going with further exciting releases including a double LP to celebrate Sam Phillip's 100th birthday and possibly Jerry Lee Lewis and Charlie Rich LPs remixed in stereo from recently discovered three-track tapes.

Along with pressing plant delays of the 7″, 10″ and 12″ variety hitting labels, Wild Records were even struck by CD production delays last year, so they kick into 2023 with a vengeance. Their schedule already boasts new albums from Bodhi Corbett, Billy And The Strange Notes and The Desperados on CD, vinyl long-players from Gizzelle and The Rhythm Shakers and a host of 45s featuring Rampage, Elvis Cantu and The Booze Bombs amongst others. They also have a compilation planned showcasing their, mostly youthful, roster of talent.



Sleazy revisit Carl Perkins' Columbia 45s this year

Many of the finest reissues and new recordings of recent years have come from Spanish shores, particularly on the vinyl front, and 2023 looks no different. Sleazy Records seem to disregard any production problems with ease as they push into the new year via a powerful line-up of releases that includes a new eight-track mini LP from Boz Boorer called *Back To Neo*. All of the 11 singles that Carl Perkins recorded for Columbia Records between 1958-1962 are back on vinyl courtesy of Sleazy and presented across two albums, both featuring extensive sleevenotes while other titles from Marvin Rainwater, Billy Brown and Sanford Clark are promised.

El Toro also have plenty of treasures to reveal although exact details are still unavailable. They do promise to continue releasing a mix of new and established artists alongside archive material and their move into publishing is sure to excite as they present a 150-page+ book, with discography, devoted to the life of Crazy Cavan.

Bear Family's new release schedule is quite staggering with more than 20 new CDs in the pipeline already, alongside another three titles in their tastily-packaged series of 10″ vinyl. Volumes 43-45 of their long-running *That'll Flat Git It!* series are in production and this time around they cherry-pick from the vaults of the Starday, Cameo, Parkway and Teen record labels. They also kickstart a new series of compilations with the first two volumes of *Chicago Rocks!*, a further collection of rock'n'roll and rockabilly rarities. Vinyl fans can look forward to selections from Big Joe Turner, Niki Sullivan and a second volume of previously unreleased tracks from Howlin' Wolf's earliest sessions between 1951 and 1952.

Plenty to look forward to, certainly, but as many labels are still feeling the pressure it's a safe bet to suggest that if you do indulge in 'pre-orders' of vinyl releases then it now just seems to be a matter of paying up and exercising a little patience. Rock'n'roll always delivers! It's just a little slower these days. ✶

NEXT FROM THE JOE MEEK TEA CHEST TAPES IS MATERIAL FROM HEINZ, GLENDA COLLINS AND JOE MEEK'S BONKERS SPACE OPERA

TOP 20 ONE-HIT WONDERS

WORDS BY **STEVE O'BRIEN**

The 50s was full of brilliant, timeless songs, sometimes by artists who could never quite manage to crack that second smash. Join us as we explore the best of the decade's one-hit wonders...

One-hit wonders are often the most mocked of all artists. But there are songs by singers and groups more successful than those flash-in-the-pan stars that remain far less loved. The curse of the one-hit wonder, though, is that your song is almost always better remembered than you are. Most rock'n'roll fans know *Earth Angel*, but can they name the group behind it? How many who have jigged to *Sea Cruise* know that it's Frankie Ford who first sang it? And *Here Comes Summer*? Could you name the artist behind that sun-dappled classic? Here, we celebrate those solitary hits and the oft-forgotten artists behind them...

Capitol
Birdwood Music Corp. ASCAP-2:25 F3391
Whistling by Don Robertson (45-15166)
THE HAPPY WHISTLER
(Don Robertson)
DON ROBERTSON
MANUFACTURED BY CAPITOL RECORDS, INC. • HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA • U.S.A.

20

DON ROBERTSON
The Happy Whistler

Capitol (1956)

Rarely has a song been so perfectly titled as Don Robertson's US No.9 and UK No.8-charting ditty, a light-as-air number with no lyrics or singing whatsoever, just Don whistling happily along for two minutes and 33 seconds. Truth is, Robertson was no vocalist and far more content behind the scenes, going on to write songs for such artists as Elvis Presley (*Anything That's Part Of You*, *Starting Today*), Jerry Lee Lewis (*I Can't Seem To Say Goodbye*) and Al Martino (*I Love You More And More Every Day*). As such, he was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1972.

Mercury
Vocal By Chuck Miller Robbins Music (ASCAP)
70627 YB11633
THE HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS
(Don Raye-Freddie Slack)
CHUCK MILLER
MERCURY RECORD CORPORATION, MADE IN U.S.A.

19

CHUCK MILLER
The House Of Blue Lights

Mercury (1955)

Born in Wellington, Kansas, Chuck Miller first signed to Capitol in 1953, having cut his teeth in the clubs of Los Angeles. Most of his earliest work for the label was pretty forgettable – MOR ballads and disposable novelty discs – but his sole hit (for Mercury, which he'd joined in 1955), an R&B-styled reworking of the 1946 song, *The House Of Blue Lights*, showed he had more rhythm than most of his easy listening stablemates. After being dropped by Mercury, Miller recorded an album for Imperial in 1959, *Now Hear This! Songs Of The Fighting 40s*. Sadly, nobody bought it.

Roulette
R-4001
Vocal 45 RPM
I'M STICKIN' WITH YOU
(Bowen-Knox)
JIMMY BOWEN
WITH THE RHYTHM ORCHIDS

18

JIMMY BOWEN
I'm Stickin' With You

Roulette (1957)

Not the host of TV darts quiz *Bullseye*, but a New Mexico-born rockabilly belter whose only hit (written by himself and Buddy Knox) would peak at No.14 on the Billboard Hot 100. With further singles tanking, he moved into music production, working with – among others – Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bert Kaempfert and Sammy Davis, Jr. He's also credited on the soundtrack to 1971 counter-culture flick *Vanishing Point* and, as a label boss, helped launch the careers of a host of country luminaries including Glen Campbell, Kenny Rogers and Hank Williams Jr.

junior
Ulysses & Bogby Music B. M. I.
45-593
GET A JOB
(Silhouettes)
THE SILHOUETTES
391

17 THE SILHOUETTES

Get A Job

Junior/Ember (1957)

The Silhouettes netted themselves a million-selling No.1 with this doo-wop classic, yet the record-buying public stayed away from every subsequent release from the Philadelphia-formed outfit. Despite the lack of hits, the group went on to perform with such names as Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson and Clyde McPhatter before splitting in 1968. The original members reformed in the 80s and continued to work until 1993. *Get A Job* has been a long-time film soundtrack favourite, popping up in 1973's *American Graffiti*, in *Trading Places* 10 years later and *Stand By Me* in 1986.

NASCO RECORDS
Excellorec Music BMI
Popular Time 2:35 (a)
OH JULIE
(Moffitt-Ball)
The Crescendos
45-6005
NASHBORO RECORD CO., INC., 177-3RD AVENUE, N., NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

16 THE CRESCENDOS

Oh Julie

Nasco (1957)

Formed early in 1957, doo-wop outfit The Crescendos performed their only hit (Billboard No.5) with backing vocals from 16-year-old singer Janice Green, who happened to be auditioning at Globe Recording Studios that day. Two more singles on Nasco – *School Girl* (again with Green backing) and *Rainy Sunday* – followed, both of which failed to land commercially, and the band (plus Green, who'd never officially joined) were dropped by the label. They'd disbanded by 1959, while Green went on to work on sessions by The Four Seasons and others.

MASCOT
M-3002 KEEL MUSIC (BMI)
VOCAL Time: 2:20
BOOK OF LOVE
(DAVIS, MALONE, PATRICK)
THE MONOTONES
45-M-124

15 THE MONOTONES

Book Of Love

Mascot/Argo (1957/58)

It's not often a toothpaste commercial inspires a hit single, but it was after Monotones leader Charles Patrick caught an ad for Pepsodent and noticed the line, "You'll wonder where the yellow went/ When you brush your teeth with Pepsodent," that he was inspired to pen the lyrics, "I wonder, wonder, wonder who, who wrote the book of love." The song peaked at Billboard No.5, but despite waxing a host of more novelty-themed follow-ups, including *Zombi* and *The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow*, more hits were sadly not forthcoming.

RCA VICTOR
47-7174
(J2PW-0936)
45 R.P.M.
"NEW ORTHOPHONIC" HIGH FIDELITY
LOLLIPOP
(Beverly Ross-Julius Dixon)
RONALD & RUBY
1:47

14 RONALD & RUBY

Lollipop

RCA (1958)

This annoyingly infectious novelty hit came courtesy of Ronald & Ruby, aka Ronald Gumm and Beverly 'Ruby' Ross, a rare – for the time – interracial singing duo. They'd started out as songwriters, composing such tracks as *Frankenstein Rock*, *Don't Come To My Party* and *The Ghost Of Love*. As Ronald & Ruby, they released several singles after the No.20-charting *Lollipop*, but none were hits. After her brush with singing stardom, Ross continued as a writer, penning tracks such as *Candy Man* (for Roy Orbison) and *Judy's Turn To Cry* (for Lesley Gore).

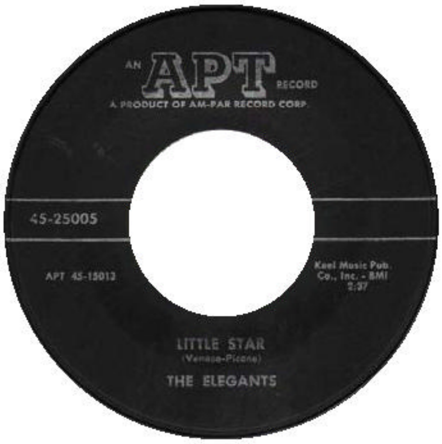
The Highest in Fi -
DEMON
FF-1507
Johnstone-Montei, Inc.-Elizabeth Mus. BMI
Vocal 2:23 (45-DE-013)
ENDLESS SLEEP
(Jody Reynolds-Dolores Nance)
JODY REYNOLDS
Distributed by Liberty Sales Corp.
DEMON RECORD CO. LOS ANGELES 16, CALIF.

13 JODY REYNOLDS

Endless Sleep

Demon (1958)

Better known in the UK via Marty Wilde's version, it was Jody Reynolds who first had a hit with *Endless Sleep*, which the young rock'n'roller had written after hearing Elvis Presley's *Heartbreak Hotel*. With lyrics telling the story of a teenager whose girlfriend has gone missing after a row, many record companies turned it down for being too depressing, until the Demon label took it on. Despite selling over a million copies and hitting No.5 in the US, Reynolds' follow-up single *Fire Of Love* only reached an underwhelming No.66, his last Hot 100 entry.


AN APT RECORD
A PRODUCT OF AM-PAR RECORD CORP.
45-25005
APT 45-15013
Keel Music Pub. Co., Inc. - BMI 2:37
LITTLE STAR
(Venosa-Picone)
THE ELEGANTS

12 THE ELEGANTS

Little Star

Apt (1958)

A doo-wop take on the nursery rhyme, *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* isn't exactly the most obvious idea for a No.1 single, but The Elegants' solitary 1958 hit – written by group members Vito Picone and Arthur Venosa – was exactly that, turning the 19th century English lullaby into something danceable. Rumour has it that the reason for The Elegants' lack of hits thereafter was because they refused to pay payola to a prominent New York DJ, which inhibited airplay of their follow-up singles. Despite their lack of chart success, they continued to perform well into the 21st century.

Time
Vocal
Brent Music Corp.
(BMI)
45 RPM
RECORD NO.
1004
(2:40)
JO9W-2164
I'VE HAD IT
(Carl Bonura - Raymond Ceroni)
THE BELL NOTES

11 THE BELL NOTES
I've Had It
Time (1958)

Formed in Long island, New York, The Bell Notes refined their sound performing at a bar owned by the father of future Aerosmith guitarist Ray Tabano (in fact, he and Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler would occasionally play between Bell Notes sets). *I've Had It* was the band's first recording, landing at No.6 on the Billboard Hot 100. There were several more singles that followed, but with *Old Spanish Town* peaking at No.76 and *Shortnin' Bread* cresting at a paltry No.96, it would be *I've Had It* that The Bell Notes would be remembered for.

AMP 3
RECORDS, INC.
UNBREAKABLE
45 R.P.M.
RECORD NO.
A-1005-10
Southern Music
Time: 2:12
ONE SUMMER NIGHT
(Danny Webb)
DANLEERS

10 THE DANLEERS
One Summer Night
Amp 3/Mercury (1958)

The Danleers released a string of 7″ discs between 1958 and 1964, but only one – *One Summer Night* – charted, peaking at No.7 on the Billboard. What a hit, though, having been covered numerous times since, including by The Diamonds (who had a No.22 entry with the song in 1961) and The Beach Boys in the 90s. By the end of the decade, The Danleers were no more, though original member Jimmy Weston later formed a new version of the band. The original line-up came back together in 1988 for a reunion show at the Westbury Music Fair on Long Island.

KAPP records
K-277X
JERRY KELLER
HERE COMES SUMMER
AND
TIME HAS A WAY

09 JERRY KELLER
Here Comes Summer
Kapp (1959)

Despite hitting the No.1 spot in the UK (and No.14 on the Billboard Hot 100) with this self-penned easy listening earworm, Arkansas-born pop singer Jerry Keller never managed another hit song on either side of the Atlantic. Keller is, however, credited as writer on *The Legend Of Shenandoah*, recited by actor James Stewart in the 1965 Western film *Shenandoah*, and he can be spotted in 1977 movie *You Light Up My Life*, playing an orchestra conductor, as well as in 1978's *If Ever I See You Again* as the main character's business partner.

HUNT
A Product of Globe Record Corp.
Distributed by ABC Paramount
Shapiro, Bernstein
ASCAP
2:22
45-H-324
45-4078
Produced by
SURE RECORD CO.
39
GUITAR BOOGIE SHUFFLE
(A. Smith)
THE VIRTUES

08 THE VIRTUES
Guitar Boogie Shuffle
Hunt (1958)

So named because of founding member Frank Virtue, The Virtues enjoyed their only chart hit with this rocking reworking of Arthur Smith's country favourite *Guitar Boogie*. The instrumental made No.5 in the US, while also becoming a sheet music smash. A run of subsequent singles – including *Flippin' In*, *Virtue's Boogie Woogie* and *Vaya Con Dios* – all flopped. A reworking of their only hit, however, managed No.95 in 1962, while they also provided the jingle for Pepsi's new lemon-lime drink, Teem. Virtue moved into music production soon after.

DOOTONE
345-B-45
Blues & Rhythm
Vocal Group
DOOTSIE WILLIAMS
PUBLICATIONS - BMI
EARTH ANGEL
(WILL YOU BE MINE)
(Curtis Williams)
THE PENGUINS

07 THE PENGUINS
Earth Angel (Will You Be Mine)
Dootone (1954)

One of the first rhythm and blues songs to cross over into the pop charts, The Penguins' evergreen 45, *Earth Angel*, would peak at No.8 on the Billboard Hot 100. Amazingly, though, it wasn't even the A-side. Dootone released *Hey Senorita* in late 1954 as the intended main attraction, only DJs started playing its flip instead, giving the L.A. doo-wop outfit their only chart hit. They were signed by Mercury, alongside The Platters, on a two-for-one deal, only it was the other group that benefited from the label's backing and The Penguins eventually split in 1962.

CAT
C-1233
45-104
VOCAL QUARTET
Pub., Progressive, BMI
Time: 2:23
SH-BOOM
(Keyes, Feaster, McRae, Edwards)
THE CHORDS
CAT RECORDS, NEW YORK, N.Y.

06 THE CHORDS
Sh-Boom
Cat (1954)

The Chords' most famous track was, like The Penguins' *Earth Angel*, the underside of their first single. The A-side was a doo-wopped cover of an old Patti Page number, *Cross Over The Bridge*, but it was the self-penned *Sh-Boom* that DJs started spinning, sending it into the Top 10 in the US. A later name change to The Chordcats (after Gem Records informed them that one of the groups on its roster was called The Chords) couldn't stop them from being one-hit wonders and the band split in 1960. The group's last surviving original member, Floyd McRae, passed away in 2013.

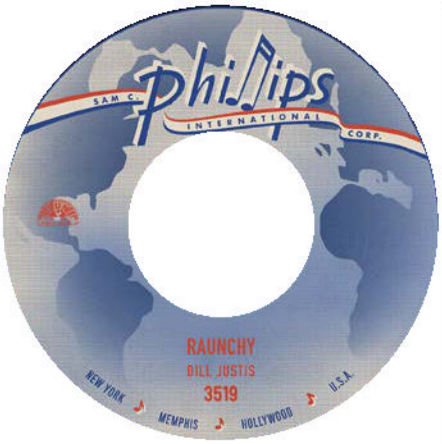
TAMLA
2648 W. GRAND BLV.
Jobete Music
BMI
Time 2:24
Detroit 8, Mich.
TR 1-3340
54027
(G1)
MONEY
(THAT'S WHAT I WANT)
(J. Bradford & B. Gordy)
BARRETT STRONG

05 BARRETT STRONG

Money (That's What I Want)

Tamla (1959)

Co-written by Motown Records founder Berry Gordy with Janie Bradford, *Money (That's What I Want)* may have only peaked at No.23 in the US, but it remains one of the most covered songs of the 50s, being versioned by The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Flying Lizards amongst numerous others. In the years after his lone hit, Strong became one of Motown's go-to songsmiths, and had a hand in such classics as Marvin Gaye's *I Heard It Through the Grapevine* and Edwin Starr's *War*. He was inducted into the Songwriters Hall Of Fame in 2004.


Phillips
SAM C.
INTERNATIONAL
CORP.
RAUNCHY
BILL JUSTIS
3519
NEW YORK
MEMPHIS
HOLLYWOOD
U.S.A.

04 BILL JUSTIS

Raunchy

Phillips International (1957)

It's rare for a one-hit wonder to have a song as garlanded as *Raunchy* has been in the 65 years since its release. Not only was this instrumental inducted into the Grammy Hall Of Fame in 1957, it was also the song that secured George Harrison's place in The Beatles (the then 14-year-old Harrison performed the track to John Lennon and Paul McCartney on the top deck of a Liverpool bus as an audition). Though a one-hit wonder in the UK and US (*Raunchy* peaked at No.2 in the US and No.11 in the UK), Justis did score a chart-topper in Australia in 1963 with *Tamoure*.

ACE RECORDS
Ace Pub
S-213 BMI
Time 2:10
554
SEA CRUISE
(H. Smith)
FRANKIE FORD
with Huey "Piano" Smith
and Orch.

03 FRANKIE FORD

Sea Cruise

Ace (1959)

Penned by New Orleans legend Huey 'Piano' Smith, *Sea Cruise* has been covered by a multitude of artists including Herman's Hermits, Shakin' Stevens, Jerry Lee Lewis, The Beach Boys, Robert Gordon and even comedian Charlie Drake, but Frankie Ford's original recording is still the one to beat. It reached No.14 in the Hot 100, and would be the only single of Ford's to make it beyond the Top 70. Ford was drafted in 1962, and performed for troops in Vietnam, Japan and Korea. In the years after, he recorded occasionally, but mostly gigged in and around New Orleans.

LINDA LU
(Ray Sharpe)
Jamie
45 RPM
Gregmark Music
Time 2:05
RS-1
Produced By
Bill-Hazlewood
RAY SHARPE
1128
MANUFACTURED BY JAMIE RECORD CO.

02 RAY SHARPE

Linda Lu

Jamie (1959)

Ray Shape's one and only smash may not have been massive at the time (it peaked at Billboard No.46), but it's proved to have quite the afterlife, having been covered by such artists as The Rolling Stones, The Kingsmen, Johnny Kidd And The Pirates, The Flying Burrito Brothers and Tom Jones. Described by one record producer as "the greatest white-sounding Black dude ever", it was Sharpe himself who penned *Linda Lu*, with future singing star Lee Hazlewood in the producer's chair and featuring Duane Eddy on guitar and Al Casey on rhythm.

01 PHIL PHILLIPS

Sea Of Love

Mercury (1959)

Mercury
RECORDS
HIGH FIDELITY
71465X45
YW18524
Kamar
(BMI) 2:30
Vocal
SEA OF LOVE
(G. Khoury-P. Baptiste)
PHIL PHILLIPS
With The Twilights
MERCURY RECORD CORPORATION · MADE IN U.S.A.

Phil Phillips claims that he was paid just $6,800 for recording this US No.2/UK No.3-charting smash, which went on to sell a remarkable one million copies. According to rock'n'roll legend, a gas meter reader heard Phillips – real name John Phillip Baptiste – practising the song and urged him to see a record producer by the name of George Khoury. *Sea Of Love* was released on Khoury's self-named independent record label, but did so well locally that Mercury picked it up for national distribution. Despite the song's success – its mega sales naturally saw it awarded a gold disc – Phillips received no further royalties during his lifetime. After being so savagely screwed over, the one-time bellhop pretty much gave up on music and a full studio album that he recorded failed to see the light of day. Despite his lack of recorded output, Phillips still performed prior to his death at the age of 94 in 2020, with one of his last gigs being at New Orleans Jazz Fest in 2005.

BANNED BY THE BEEB

The BBC's iconic Broadcasting House HQ at Portland Place

PHOTO CREDIT

Following the BBC's recent 100th anniversary, we take a look behind the scenes at discs – often from A-list artists – that 'Auntie Beeb' disallowed in the 50s and 60s

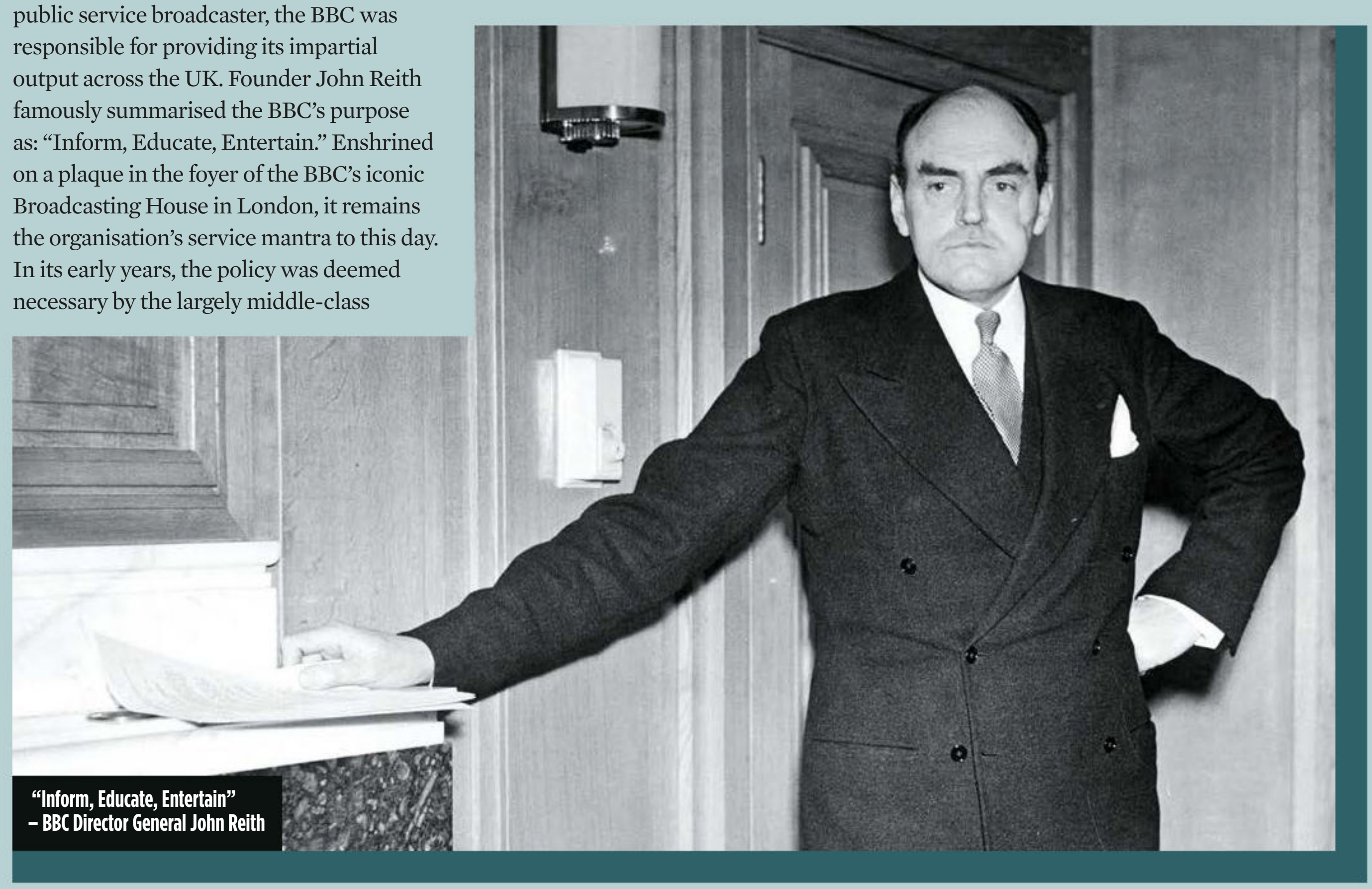
WORDS BY **JULIE BURNS**

You could call it an early case of cancel culture. In their self-appointed role as the nation's cultural guardian, the BBC retained the right to restrict certain records from the airwaves. Intriguing files in the BBC's Written Archives Centre in Caversham, Berkshire – now open to the public – reveal hundreds of repressed recordings. According to their 'Best Practice' guidelines, an interesting spectrum of 'unsuitable' reasons were listed. These spanned foul language, lyrics with explicit sexual content, alleged drug references, product placement, distortion of classical music, controversial political matter (applied to some of Bob Dylan's early protest songs), plus themes dealing with religion, bewitchment or death. And during sensitive post-war social times, not forgetting, anything 'too sentimental'.

Neither private corporation, nor government department, within its unique niche as the foremost national public service broadcaster, the BBC was responsible for providing its impartial output across the UK. Founder John Reith famously summarised the BBC's purpose as: "Inform, Educate, Entertain." Enshrined on a plaque in the foyer of the BBC's iconic Broadcasting House in London, it remains the organisation's service mantra to this day. In its early years, the policy was deemed necessary by the largely middle-class administrators to act as a moral compass for listeners. It was described by critics as "Auntie knows best" syndrome. The abbreviated 'Auntie Beeb' name stuck, as did the BBC's mission statement that taste, decency and decorum must be maintained at all times. Some songs were banned for a limited period and have since received BBC airplay. Some were only prohibited from children's programming. In later cases, others were banned after first being aired (usually in times of political conflict). No matter whether the offending song was a new release, had entered the UK singles chart, or how popular its artist was – hello, Elvis! – those were of no relevance. For the Beeb's brigade of moral keepers, it was often a case of 'if in doubt, leave it out.'

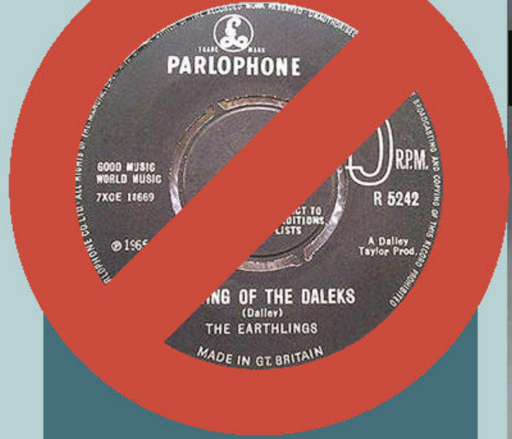
Censorial intent was first practiced by the BBC's partner The Dance Music Policy Committee, which was established in the 1930s. As *The Oxford Handbook Of Music Censorship* points out, the BBC's use of a publishing ally was "so that the corporation felt sure that sheet music had already been vetted". By the mid-60s, however, "record sales left printed music in the dust and the committee ceased to exist". Before this, its agenda looked set to last. In 1942, one sharp-shooting directive read: "We have recently adopted a policy of excluding sickly sentimentality which, particularly when sung by certain vocalists, can become nauseating and not at all in keeping with what we feel to be the need of the public in this country in the fourth year of war."

It appears that the instructions of the wartime BBC Director of Music, and head of one of its vetting panels, composer Sir Arthur Bliss, suggested the committee ban songs "slushy in sentiment". This continued on, post war. A staggeringly long list of "undesirable" 45s were denied airplay, revealing that the 1950s and 60s acts were frequently affected. Perhaps such strict censure coincided with the then-conservative culture: Britain under Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (1957-1963) echoing America's restrained Eisenhower era of 1953-1961; although interestingly, BBC-banned material still received plenty of airplay Stateside. Bans would often be for oblique reasons. For example, in February 1956, Eddie Calvert's instrumental theme from the film, *The Man With The Golden*



"Inform, Educate, Entertain"
– BBC Director General John Reith

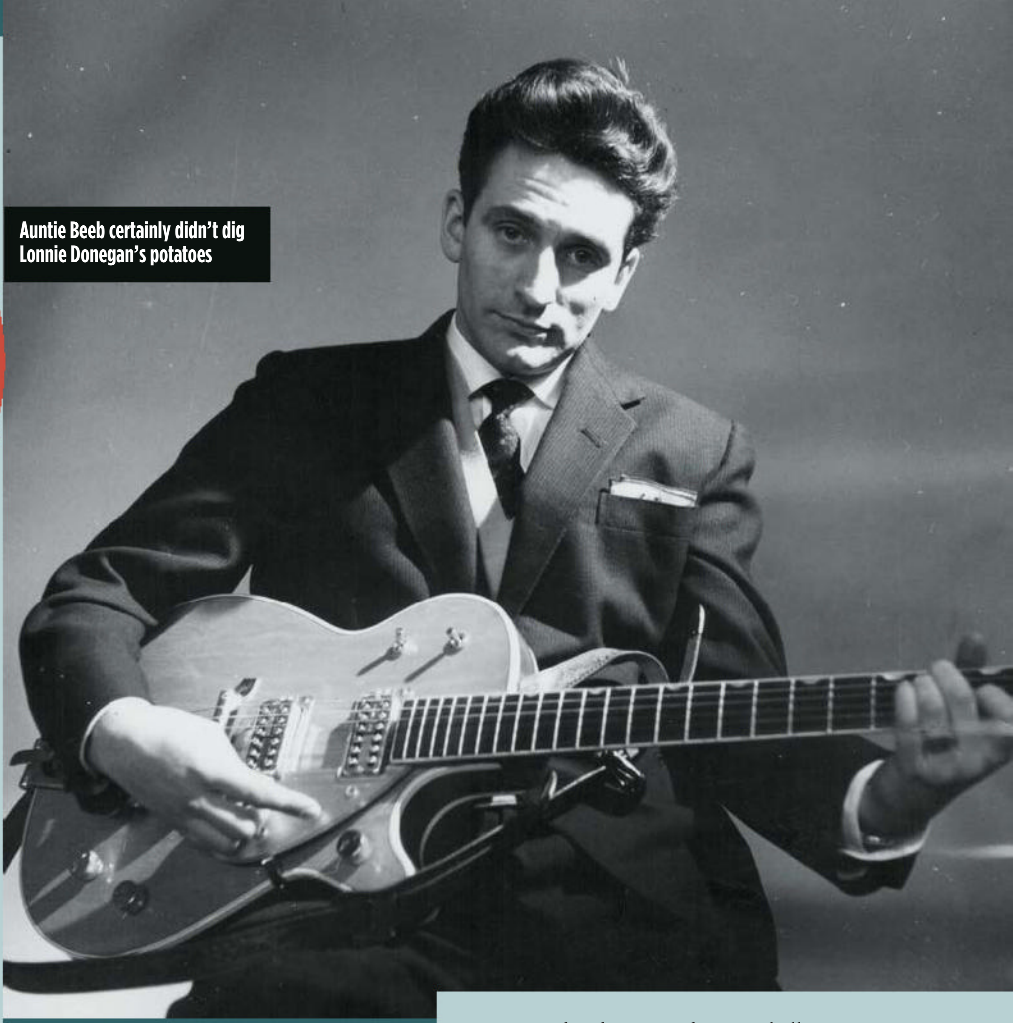
FOX PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES WILLIAM A. ATKINS/CENTRAL PRESS/GETTY IMAGES



TO BAN OR NOT TO BAN?

In 1965, suitably inspired by the BBC's scintillating new sci-fi series, *Doctor Who*, Birmingham's proto-electric combo The Earthlings came up with quirky cosmic surf rock composition, *Landing Of The Daleks*. It became a hot potato, and not because it pinched the idea of the 'Exterminate! Exterminate!' exclaiming extra-terrestrials. The ban occurred because, two thirds of the way in, it clearly transmitted an SOS in Morse code. Being indistinguishable from the actual distress Mayday signal that occupied the same radio frequency, the song was not exactly banned but certainly unfit for broadcast. The Beeb later aired an alternative version featuring scrambled beeps, a take so rare that it was never available in record stores.

Five years later came a famous sleight of censorship, rather than complete ban, involving the Kinks out-there classic *Lola*. Considering its visionary depiction of a mixed up, gender-free world, the pre-woke Beeb had surprisingly no objection to it – apart from the fact that singer-songwriter Ray Davies rhymed the title with Coca-Cola. Luckily, he narrowly avoided a product placement ban, swapping the offending lyric to 'cherry cola' before the record was released. It went on to be a UK No.2 and US No.9. Fast forward to 2013: following former PM Margaret Thatcher's death, there was the thorny problem of what to do with the notorious anti-Thatcher song, *Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead*, which was heading up the No.2 slot on the UK singles chart. In this case, BBC taste prevailed. An extract was aired, but as a news item only.



Auntie Beeb certainly didn't dig Lonnie Donegan's potatoes

Arm, was forbidden, the BBC stated, due to its link with a movie about drugs. Renamed *Main Title Theme*, Billy May's version was subsequently considered fit for transmission.

Elsewhere, embargoes were dished out as discs were classified as "immoral". Sometimes the wilfully interpreted euphemistic aspect of them was, in modern terms, hilarious. Case in point: Lonnie Donegan's *Diggin' My Potatoes* in 1954 (though the veto on his 1958 ode *Nobody Loves Like An Irishman* was perhaps more understandable.) Joe Brown's *Little Ukelele* was suppressed for the same reason as George Formby's 1933 platter *With My Little Ukelele in My Hand*; proof, if needed, of how the Beeb's mindset had stayed static over three decades.

Pretty much anything that implied loose morals was decreed off-limits. This duly affected The Vipers Skiffle Group's original version of *Maggie May*, Jimmie Rodgers' *Honeycomb*, Elvis Presley's *Hard Headed Woman*, and even clean-cut Cliff Richard's revved-up jiver, *High Class Baby*.

CHUCK BERRY'S HIT MAYBELLENE WAS BLOCKED, NOT FOR ADVERTISING COSMETICS, BUT BECAUSE THE GIRL HE WAS SINGING ABOUT WASN'T "TRUE"

In 1955, Chuck Berry's hit *Maybellene* was blocked, not for advertising the moniker of an American cosmetics giant, but because the girl he was singing about wasn't "true" and probably played around. The star rocker later enjoyed a reprieve for his far racier *My Ding-a-Ling*. Saved from morality campaigner Mary Whitehouse's firing line in 1972, it hit the UK and US No.1 spot. Gene Vincent's sultry *Woman Love* got shunted, as did his trademark brilliant *Be-Bop-A-Lula* in 1956. Here, the BBC opined that the song was "offensive and the lyrics can't be understood." This pertained to the line, "She's the one that gets more more more" and the oft-repeated phrase of the song title. That year, the same ban applied to Mickey and Sylvia's *Love Is Strange*. The BBC red-flagged the lyric, 'Love is money in the hand', for the notion that it might encourage prostitution. This joined similar other previously confiscations including Johnnie Ray's breathy *Such A Night* from 1954 and, of course, in this context, The Dominoes' 1951 smash *Sixty Minute Man* – the hugely euphemistic jaunty number that kickstarted a musical trend for thinly-veiled sauce.

CHRIS WARE/KEYSTONE FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES   MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES   DAVID REDFERN/REDFERNS

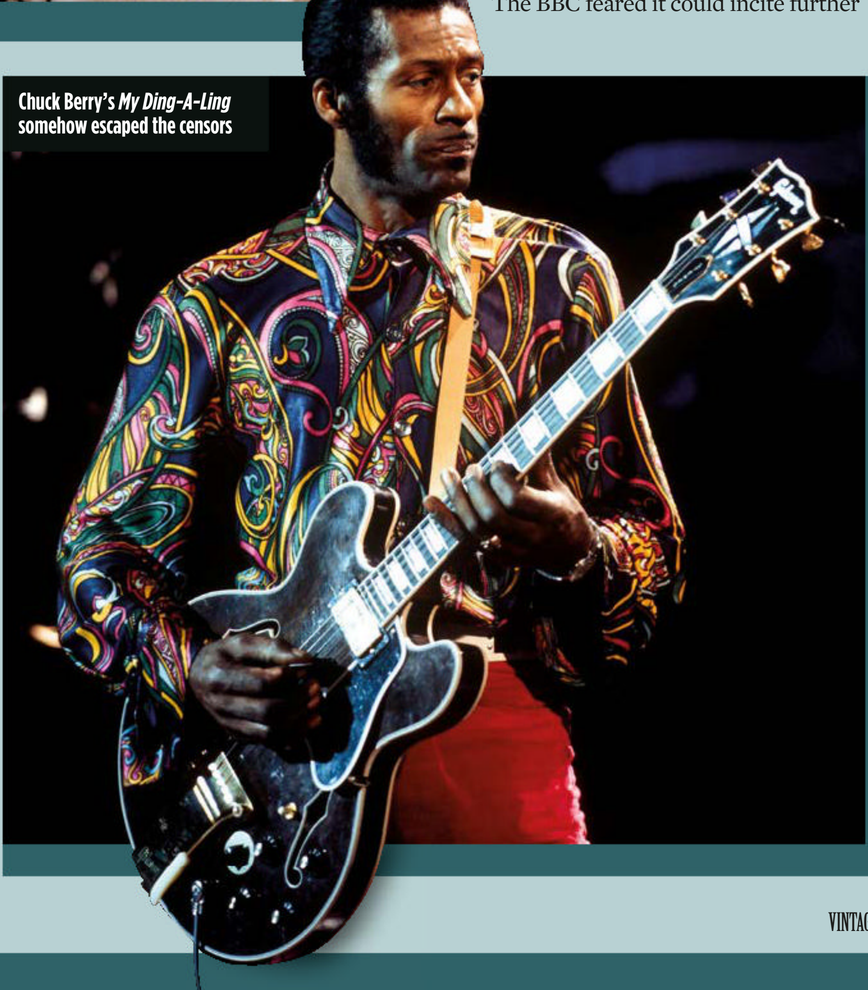
Gene Vincent's classic *Be-Bop-A-Lula* was deemed too 'offensive' by Auntie Beeb

Songs denoting bad behaviour, morbidity, violence and murder were dutifully killed off as being in "bad taste". In 1959, The Coasters' *Charlie Brown* with its phrase, "who's always throwing spitballs", was deemed "disgusting, delinquent." Other culprits numbered Bobby Darin's *Mack The Knife* and the Joe Meek-produced Screaming Lord Sutch track, *Jack The Ripper*. Accompanying *Dinner With Drac* (John Zacherle, 1958), another cool ghoul spoof, 1962's Billboard Halloween hit, *Monster Mash*, in which Bobby Pickett impersonates Boris Karloff and trills, "It was a graveyard smash" was vetoed – until the next decade, when the ban was lifted and it achieved a UK No.3.

Likewise, so-called 'splatter platters' or – in industry lingo – 'commemorative death discs' were a raving no-no. The trend of (admittedly maudlin) tragedy 'tribute' songs was first attributed to Varetta Dillard's self-penned mid-50s salutes to the recently deceased Johnny Ace, and then James Dean. In 1959, country singer-songwriter Ruby Wright hit the Top 20 with *Three Stars*, a homage to Ritchie Valens, Buddy Holly and The Big Bopper, following their tragic deaths in a plane crash earlier that year. The BBC execs decided it was a "nauseating piece of material."

Two years later, Mike Berry's *Tribute To Buddy* fared no better. The corporation recoiled at anything involving car crashes, teenage deaths or mentions of the afterlife. "Tasteless," intoned the BBC about both of the 1960 versions of *Tell Laura I Love Her* by Ray Peterson and Ricky Valance: a song about Tommy, who enters a car race to win enough cash to buy Laura a wedding ring, then dies uttering the title words. Likewise, they disliked Mark Dinning's *Teen Angel* (1959), and the Everly Brothers' *Ebony Eyes*, a fictional tale of lost love via an air accident which, nevertheless, with *Walk Right Back*, became a double A-side UK chart-topper. It also avoided *Johnny Remember Me* (also 1961), in which a young man is haunted by his dead lover. No matter, as for John Leyton, it was still a No.1 – if his only one. Equally, despite its US No.1 status, it was goodbye to the Shangri-Las' haunting epitaph to motorbike gang culture, the legendary *Leader Of The Pack* – the reason being, as well as its teenage death motif, it came in the wake of the notorious Mods v Rockers Brighton showdown in May 1964.

The BBC feared it could incite further ➡



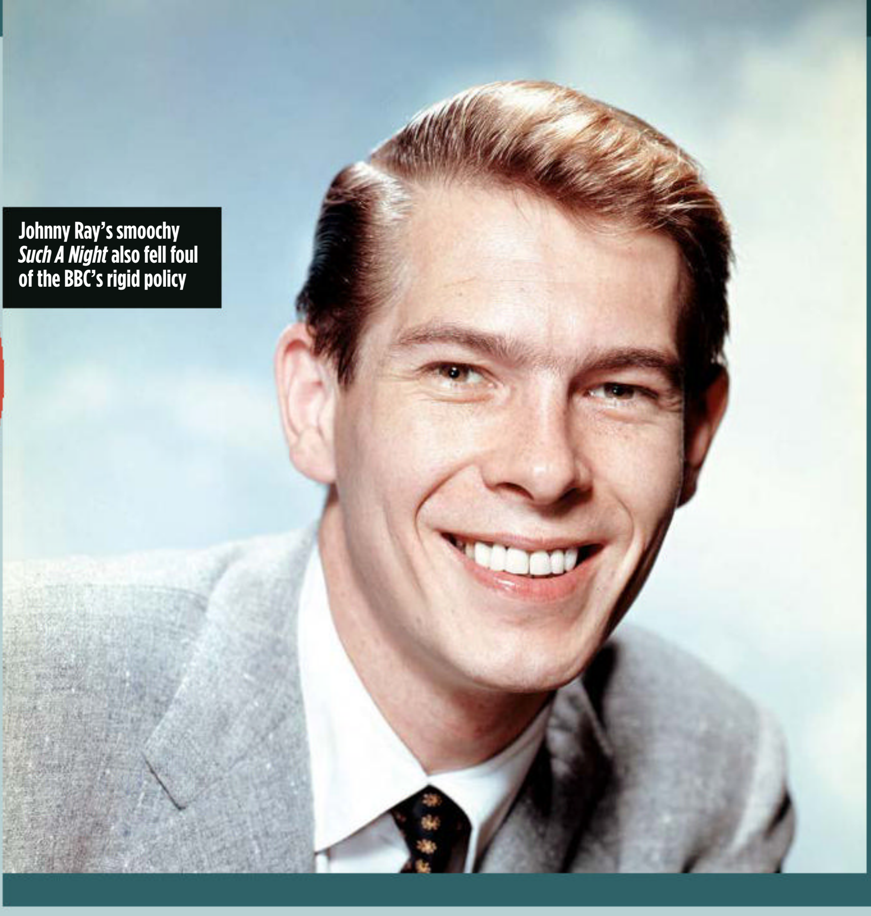
Chuck Berry's *My Ding-A-Ling* somehow escaped the censors

Triump
SUPER FI
RGM 1008
Side A
Essex Music
pm
Recording first published 1960
MCPS
B·I·E·M
GREEN JEANS
(Composed by P. Flee-Rakker)
THE FABULOUS
FLEE-RAKKERS

ROCKING UP A CLASSICAL STORM

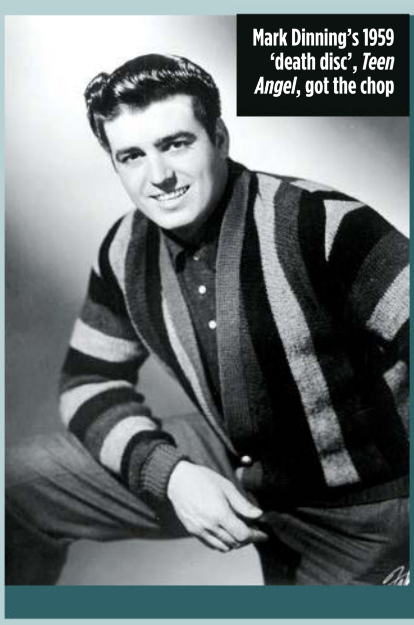
When it came to the classics, they were hallowed ground: strictly not to be tampered with. During his influential run as BBC Director of Music, Sir Arthur Bliss advised the Dance Music Policy Committee to prohibit "pop" versions of classical pieces. Classified as "distortion of melody, harmony and rhythm", the early-60s trend of bold reworkings or mashed-up classics were often outlawed. In March '61, *Melody Maker* reported that toga-clad combo Nero And The Gladiators' rocked-up version of Grieg's classical melody, *In The Hall Of The Mountain King*, from the *Peer Gynt Suite* was banned by the BBC. Despite showcasing the expert drum and guitar work of Tommy Brown and Joe Moretti, the Beeb took exception to the wry vocal intro, "Ah, say there Brutus, like where is the king's pad?" and its overall "lack of respect" for the classics. In contrast, Decca stablemates The Vernons Girls got away with their 1962 saucy ditty *Dat's Love* – sung in authentic Scouse accents, and a wry rip-off of Bizet's *Carmen* – by tucking it away on an EP.

The Cougars' 'subversion' of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* into *Saturday Night At The Duckpond* was derided as "a travesty". Yet B. Bumble and The Stingers' *Nutrocker* (a kickass, sped-up take on the same composer's *Nutcracker Suite*) was allowed as it was considered more lightweight in the first place. Finally, The Fabulous Flee-Rakkers' frenzied *Green Jeans*, produced by Joe Meek, was labelled "an insult to the memory of Ralph Vaughan-Williams and his beloved *Fantasia On Greensleeves*."


Johnny Ray's smoochy *Such A Night* also fell foul of the BBC's rigid policy

LINK WRAY'S INSTRUMENTAL, RUMBLE, WAS DEEMED "WILD, AGGRESSIVE AND LIKELY TO INCITE JUVENILE VIOLENCE" AND BLACKLISTED IN 1958

inter-gang battles – like Link Wray's instrumental *Rumble*, which was deemed "wild, aggressive and likely to incite juvenile violence" and blacklisted in 1958. No surprise meanwhile that provocative titles like *It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels* (Kitty Wells, 1952) and *Rock You Sinners* (Art Baxter, '58) were long gone. Innocent offerings could also be culled: The Crew Cuts' winsome warbler *Angels In The Sky*, Ricky Nelson's *Fools Rush In (Where Angels Far To Tread)*, Billy Fury's *My Christmas Prayer* and even Elvis' *White Christmas*. As for mentions of God in *Guess Things Happen That Way*, the head of religious broadcasting got to curtail the great Johnny Cash.


Mark Dinning's 1959 'death disc', *Teen Angel*, got the chop

Technically speaking, in the words of ex-BBC Radio 1 DJ Mike Read (himself purveyor of a notorious ban in 1984, for refusing to play Frankie Goes To Hollywood's raunchy hit *Relax*): "The BBC don't ban records. They just don't play them," meaning that although the Beeb hadn't the might to universally outlaw material, they had the right of withdrawal. Whether or not bans adversely affected or benefited record sales in the 50s and 60s is a moot point: the majority would still have been aired on popular commercial station Radio Luxembourg.

In an effort to stay relevant and progressive, according to the BBC, record bans have largely no longer applied in the past 20 years. Notice of public feeling has taken precedence in recent times. In 2007, for example, a ban on the full, sweary and atmospheric, version of The Pogues' *Fairytale Of New York* was revoked, following a public outcry. Social opinion obviously holds sway these days. A century on, it seems the BBC's balance of power has been retuned. Today's more liberal listener demands to be listened to. ✶

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VINTAGE*ROCK TOP TEN

WEEK ENDING **29 JAN 1964**

Dave Clark, the Fab Four, squeaky drum pedals and a backstage fight

DAN BIGGANE

01 (1) **GLAD ALL OVER**
THE DAVE CLARK FIVE (COLUMBIA)
10 WEEKS ON CHART

▲ **02** (3) **HIPPY HIPPY SHAKE**
SWINGING BLUE JEANS (HMV)
7 WEEKS ON CHART

1

GLAD ALL OVER
THE DAVE CLARK FIVE (COLUMBIA)
Topping the hit parade for two weeks, this was the only time The Dave Clark Five claimed pole position in the UK. Written by band leader/drummer Clark with singer Mike Smith, this anthemic track was aided by an epic call-and-response verse and pounding drums. Noting how audiences reacted "to the stomping things we were doing", Clark was convinced the song would prove popular. Engineer Adrian Kerridge developed that thump which would be christened the 'Tottenham Sound'… however, it's been adopted by Spurs' rivals Crystal Palace FC as their club anthem. While it only reached No.6 in the US, *Glad All Over* triggered a lasting relationship Stateside – the band played it on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in March 1964, and were invited back for a record number of appearances. In 2008, The DC5 made the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame and an all-star cast including Joan Jett, John Fogerty and Billy Joel played a rousing version of the hit.

3

I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND
THE BEATLES
(PARLOPHONE)
With advance orders of over one million, *I Want To Hold Your Hand* rocketed to the UK's No.1 within a week of its release in November 1963. It usurped *She Loves You* in the top spot, making The Beatles the first act to topple themselves from the UK summit. Across the pond, the song had started its 15-week Hot 100 run on 18 January 1964 and, by February, The Fab Four had scored their first US No.1. On 9 February, 73.3 million Americans tuned into *The Ed Sullivan Show* for the first appearance of The Beatles on US TV, the moment Beatlemania took off in North America. After seven weeks, *I Want To Hold Your Hand* was finally replaced at the top by *She Loves You*, the first time an act had done this on the Billboard chart since 1956, when Elvis' *Love Me Tender* dethroned *Don't Be Cruel*.

2

HIPPY HIPPY SHAKE
SWINGING BLUE JEANS (HMV)
In a chart dominated by Merseybeat bands, it was the Swinging Blue Jeans who registered the highest placing for a Liverpudlian act here. Originally written and performed by US rock'n'roller Chan Romero in 1959 and clocking in at just 1:43, this single sold three million copies and occupied a Top 10 place for seven weeks. While their next release, a cover of Little Richard's *Good Golly Miss Molly* was kept out of the Top 10 by Millie's *My Boy Lollipop*, and its follow-up *You're No Good* would be their last notable hit (No.3), the success of *Hippy Hippy Shake* still earned the group a spot on the first *Top Of The Pops* in January 1964. However, the happy occasion was marred by a brawl which broke out between the Scouse scallies and The Rolling Stones over a ballpoint pen that someone had borrowed to sign an autograph for a dinner lady…

4

I ONLY WANT TO BE WITH YOU
DUSTY SPRINGFIELD (PHILIPS)
With her bright blonde beehive hairdo and thick black eyeliner, Dusty Springfield was the absolute epitome of swinging 60s London style. The atmosphere that she could evoke with her impeccable delivery ensured she'd stand shoulder-to-shoulder alongside the likes of Aretha Franklin as one of the finest female soul singers of all time. Heavily influenced by groups such as The Shirelles and The Crystals, it was while playing New York with folk trio The Springfields that Dusty first experienced the magic of Motown. Captivated by The Exciters' *Tell Him*, she decided to shift gears and for this, her debut solo single, producer Johnny Franz adopted a Phil Spector-style Wall Of Sound approach. Remarkably, it would only reach No.4 in the chart on home soil. However, it was the first song to be performed on *Top Of The Pops*.

▼ 03 (2) **I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND**
THE BEATLES (PARLOPHONE)
8 WEEKS ON CHART

04 (4) **I ONLY WANT TO BE WITH YOU**
DUSTY SPRINGFIELD (PHILIPS)
10 WEEKS ON CHART

▲ 05 (6) **TWENTY FOUR HOURS FROM TULSA**
GENE PITNEY (UNITED ARTISTS)
8 WEEKS ON CHART

▲ 06 (26) **NEEDLES AND PINS**
THE SEARCHERS (PYE)
2 WEEKS ON CHART

07 (7) **SWINGING ON A STAR**
BIG DEE IRWIN (COLPIX)
10 WEEKS ON CHART

▼ 08 (5) **SHE LOVES YOU**
THE BEATLES (PARLOPHONE))
22 WEEKS ON CHART

▲ 09 (16) **AS USUAL**
BRENDA LEE (BRUNSWICK)
3 WEEKS ON CHART

▲ 10 (23) **I'M THE ONE**
GERRY AND THE PACEMAKERS
(COLUMBIA)
2 WEEKS ON CHART

TWENTY FOUR HOURS FROM TULSA

GENE PITNEY (UNITED ARTISTS)

After penning hits for Bobby Vee (*Rubber Ball*), Ricky Nelson (*Hello Mary Lou*), and The Crystals (*He's A Rebel*), Gene Pitney turned to Burt Bacharach and Hal David for his own global breakthrough. Having only achieved minor chart successes thus far, with *(I Wanna) Love My Life Away* and *Town Without Pity*, this tale of a man who gives in to temptation en route to his intended firmly established the singer in the UK and he'd go on to become a permanent fixture in the hit parade for the rest of the decade.

SWINGING ON A STAR

BIG DEE IRWIN (COLPIX)

This Academy Award-winning song, originally performed by Bing Crosby in the 1944 film *Going My Way*, was injected with a shot of soul courtesy of Big Dee Irwin's duet with Little Eva. After enjoying R&B success in the US fronting The Pastels and having appeared on concert tours as part of Alan Freed's Big Beat Show, great things were anticipated for Irwin. However, he would be consigned to the one-hit wonder club as a solo act. Even more tragic, Little Eva, who'd landed a global smash with *The Loco-Motion* in 1962, wasn't even credited here for her perfectly executed interjections.

AS USUAL

BRENDA LEE (BRUNSWICK)

Having muscled her way to No.4 just four years earlier as a fresh-faced teen with the bombastic debut, *Sweet Nothin's*, Little Miss Dynamite had become something of a regular fixture in the UK charts. Written by Alex Zanetis, *As Usual* was a decidedly more mature-sounding offering for the recently turned 20-year-old chanteuse. It would be her last significant UK hit. In recent years, though, she can regularly be found *Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree*, a perennial Top 10 seasonal smash.

NEEDLES AND PINS

THE SEARCHERS (PYE)

Having stormed the charts with *Sweets For My Sweet* and *Sugar And Spice*, The Searchers sought out a another smash. On hearing Cliff Bennett perform *Needles And Pins*, they quickly recorded their take. While Tony Jackson sung those debut singles, Mike Pender took over here and, despite a squeaky drum pedal, it became their biggest hit holding No.1 for three weeks. Written by Jack Nitzsche and Sonny Bono, it had been a minor US hit for Jackie DeShannon. However, as the Brits swept the States, these Liverpudlians found themselves at US No.13.

SHE LOVES YOU

THE BEATLES (PARLOPHONE)

Taking the "yeah, yeah, yeahs" from the Everly Brothers' hit *Temptation* and mixing it with the "wooooos" of the Isley Brothers' *Twist And Shout*, the Fabs' fourth single cemented full-blown Beatlemania and helped kickstart the British invasion. With advance UK orders of 500,000, the 45 would go on to shift 1,922,275 copies and become the band's all-time best-seller, spending 21 weeks in the Top 10, six at No.1. Following *Ed Sullivan* [see No.2], *She Loves You* would go on to claim the Hot 100 No.1 for two weeks in March 1964.

I'M THE ONE

GERRY AND THE PACEMAKERS (COLUMBIA)

Having become the first group to top the UK charts with their opening three singles – *How Do You Do It?*, *I Like It* and *You'll Never Walk Alone* – 1963 had been a stellar debut year for this Liverpudlian outfit. The collective's chart-topping winning streak came to end at the beginning of 1964 with this upbeat number, penned by frontman Gerry Marsden. With producer George Martin once again at the helm, *I'm The One*, would peak at No.2.

"When something is taken away from you, you want it back even more"

After a period of serious illness, recovery and reflection, Bob Butfoy brings Jack Rabbit Slim back into glorious action for 2023 with a new album and a return to the live stage. Here, the frontman looks back, and forwards, at a life in rockin'.

WORDS BY **CRAIG BRACKENRIDGE**

After almost a decade-and-a-half as one of the leading lights of UK rockabilly it was something of a surprise that Jack Rabbit Slim's career came to a close one cold November night in 2018 with a triumphant farewell gig at the suitably sleazy Hairy Dog in Derby.

The band went out in a blaze of glory to a packed house and it was captured for posterity on Western Star's *Live At The Hoochie Coochie Club* album, but surely there were some mixed emotions in the days following that event? "Personally, I was happy that we'd finished a great band on such a high," says frontman Bob Butfoy proudly. "I was really pleased we packed the venue out and gave the legacy of the band a fitting end." That seemed to be closure for the story but there were some unexpected challenges lurking on the horizon. "Little did I know that in almost exactly a year's time, life was going to be turned upside down" recalls Butfoy.

Wolf Call: Bob has had to work hard to restore his voice

The end of Jack Rabbit Slim was in reality more a matter of geography than the old 'creative differences' excuse that many bands trot out, and at their last concert they seemed to be a very tight-knit group with the type of togetherness onstage that just can't be faked. "I was already living in Spain when we did the last performance," remembers Bob.

"A year prior to the gig it was agreed that because of logistics we'd do one last hurrah and go out with a bang. So the end of the band was only because I was moving to another country."

Won't Stay Down: (Left-Right) Bob Butfoy, Nico Sc'erri, Tommy Hillebrandt and Brett Waters

> “Just as I was beginning to feel like I was turning a corner, I literally had to start again”

The residence in Spain eventually ended, but not long after Butfoy was back in the UK he had a stroke in the latter part of 2019. For someone with a reputation as a hugely energetic performer this was a major shock. “At the time, it was totally unexpected. I was playing some solo gigs, planning more, and still wanted and needed to perform. After tests, it was apparent that this had been building up over the years,” explains Bob.

Cruelly, Butfoy was hit by crippling fatigue and his speech was affected making singing out of the question. Sadly, there was worse to come. “I started to improve but just as I was beginning to feel like I was turning a corner, I had another stroke a year later and literally had to start again.”

Determined to get back in action, Bob had two separate terms of speech therapy and did what he could to tackle the fatigue. A chance phone conversation then put him back on track. “(Western Star label boss) Alan Wilson had always kept in touch and called me one day,” Butfoy says. “I think he was surprised at my speech improvement and we started to talk about a solo spot at his next Round-Up gig. I was enthused and it gave me a target to aim for. I hadn't really sung for a good couple of years and it remained difficult so I started working with a vocal coach to help me improve. It was – and still is – frustrating because before I was ill I never had to think about singing, it was just something

➡

Snakes alive! New LP *Serpent Slide* arrives later this year

I did. So, to this day I still have sessions with the coach."

With a lot of rehearsals, some silent restful periods and the support of Bob's wife, the gig came round and delivered what Butfoy refers to as "a personally pleasing standard". The Jack Rabbit Slim comeback was on...

> "By inventing 'sleazeabilly', only we could judge if it was right or wrong"

Looking back over the band's substantial back catalogue of recordings and countless live performances, the depth of musical influences which Jack Rabbit Slim have displayed shows a real desire to be more than 'just' a rockabilly outfit. Bob agrees: "I always wanted us to be different," he explains. "Being an Elvis fan, I've heard so many different styles through his music – rockabilly, rock'n'roll, blues, R&B, gospel, country, soul, ballads, rock etc and I've really just wanted to be that diverse. By inventing 'sleazeabilly' we gave us our own tag. Only we could judge if it was right or wrong."

But has that desire always gone to plan?

"Over the years there's a handful of songs I probably feel now aren't as good as I first hoped," shrugs Butfoy honestly, "But every day's a school day and you're learning on the job – we're still learning today!"

Another focus seems to be on creating new material in a scene which is sometimes criticised for relying too heavily on covers. "It's important that original material gets out there," says Bob emphatically. "Hopefully, future generations have what I'd like to think will be their 'Sun' classics."

Another key element in the band's history has been their long working relationship with Alan Wilson. Butfoy explains the roots of this collaboration: "Back when the band formed in 2004, I was looking for a label and saw a Western Star album on eBay with a link to the studio. I knew who Al was but we really hadn't spoken before, so I took a leap of faith and called him up. A couple of hours later we both knew a lot more about each other and a date had been arranged for JRS to record at his studio. We arrived and we recorded a little rockabilly tune I'd written called *Tonight* because that's what I thought Al wanted to hear."

It was at this point that 'sleazabilly' was born as next up was the song *Cherry Pie*. "I warned Al this was a little different but what I really liked," says Bob. "We played it... paused... and he said, 'After that, you can come back here anytime you like!' The rest, as they say, is history."

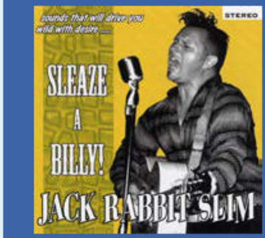
With over four years since their last live appearance, how do things look for Jack Rabbit Slim in 2023? "After speaking with Alan at the Round-Up in 2022 he asked me if I fancied doing a new Jack Rabbit Slim album and launching it with a comeback gig back at the same festival in 2023," confides Butfoy. "The gig I'd just done gave me renewed confidence that I could pull it off, so of course I agreed. We then set about planning our attack. Al and I thought it would be a good idea to keep all these plans hush-hush for maximum impact, so you're reading it here first – JRS will appear on 3 June 2023 at The Rockin Round-Up!"

The task of getting a group together was obviously the next challenge and drummer Tony Hillebrandt was first onboard. They both agreed that bass-slapper Nico Sc'erri was a natural choice, so only the role of guitarist was vacant. "Brett Waters (from The Bullets) had played guitar on my two solo gigs," reveals Bob "We loved the same things and as he was a fan of JRS he knew our songs and all about the sleazeabilly craft. He was the man for the job and we were all pleased when he jumped at the offer. Now we had a band!"

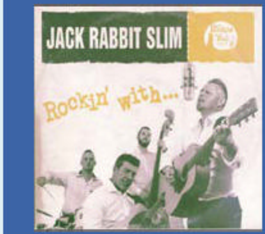
➡

SLEAZABILLY OVERLOAD

Five back catalogue blasts from the JRS canon



SLEAZE A BILLY! (2008)
This was something of a mission statement from the band as they struck out with their own brand of rockin'. It's hot stuff indeed – a healthy portion of greasy, grinding and exotically-charged rockabilly and the studio album that introduced the world to the delightfully naughty *Kitten With A Whip*.



ROCKIN' WITH... (2015)
You can take your pick of formats here as this six-track mini-album on a 10" slice of wax was eventually accompanied by a Volume 2 in 2021. Both of these Western Star releases were compiled on a single CD but however you get your musical kicks, *Rockin' With...* contains another dozen self-penned tracks that prove Jack Rabbit Slim can easily match their live intensity in the studio.

JACK RABBIT SLIM
From the Waist Down
Hairdos & Heartaches

FROM THE WAIST DOWN / HAIRDOS & HEARTACHES (2018)
For the JRS uninitiated, this is the only place to start. One CD featuring two albums and 26 tracks.

DESPEDIDA
JACK RABBIT SLIM

DESPEDIDA (2018)
Hard to pronounce but easy to listen to, this is the band's most mature album to date. A dozen assured tracks, some great cover artwork and the final song, *It's Not Goodbye It's Just Adios*, says it all.

"Killer Dilla"
JACK RABBIT SLIM

KILLER DILLA (2020)
Recorded 'live' in 2010, this session produced a four-track 7" EP. Expanded with four more songs, a pink vinyl 10" arrived a decade later. The title track is a speedfest, *Rattlesnake Bop*, *Queen Of The Curves* and *Cat Fight* keep standards high while *Ballad Of A Pirate Queen* initiates some dancefloor pounding.

The Bullets' Brett Waters takes on guitar duties

JRS are preparing for the "comeback of all comebacks"

This new collaboration has borne fruit already and over half of the new album, *Serpent Slide*, is in the bag with the remainder of tracks to be recorded early in 2023. Following its release on CD at the comeback gig in June, selections from the LP will appear across two 10" mini-albums with the possibility of an EP to follow later.

Bob is already excited about the new material: "I've personally written a big chunk of songs but we also have collaborations with all the band and tracks from the pens of Nico, Brett and Alan Wilson. I'm really looking forward to this album being out there with the usual mix of styles you'd expect from a JRS offering."

The final question remains: will there be more live work planned with this revitalised line-up? "Only after the launch show at the Round-Up will we be available for any other gigs, because of the fact that I now need so much preparation and care before I sing. We won't be out performing every week and will have to carefully select the venues and events we play. That said, you won't be short-changed. Me and the boys are fired up to make this the comeback of all comebacks – when something is taken away from you, you want it back even more."

With their new album and the possibility of more gigs, 2023 is looking bright and Butfoy himself shares this positive outlook. "I'm pleased to say that I feel a whole lot better these days," he says. "There are compromises I have to make in day-to-day life and always a lot of preparation before I even have to think of singing, but I'm on the road to recovery and excited about making new music. Sleaze levels are high, so be prepared. JRS are back!" ✶

A MAN ALONE

The Solo Excursion

One major detour for Bob Butfoy during the Jack Rabbit Slim years was his 2017 solo album, *Deliverance*, which included guest contributions from Darrel Higham, Alan Wilson, The Bitter Pills and Rob Tyler (Restless/ Outer Limits). While many songs on the album stuck to a rockin' template, material such as *Gay Tony*, *Angels Will Fall* and the title track felt like Butfoy was exploring songwriting styles that perhaps did not fit the Jack Rabbit Slim sound, but was that really the case? "That's right to be honest," agrees Bob. "I enjoy experimenting with different styles as a sort of test, to see how it can stack up with what's out there."

Not many labels would be as supportive of an act who wanted to 'spread their wings' musically but long-term collaborators Western Star went with it and along with the CD release they also issued the album across two coloured 10" vinyl albums, *Deliverance* and *Are You Blue?,* in 2021. These editions also featured a further three original compositions from Bob along with his take on Billy Fury's doom-laden track, *Don't Jump*, and a warm tribute to Elvis on the King's aching ballad, *Danny*. "Luckily for me, Alan Wilson has been supportive with me in everything I've wanted to do," says Butfoy warmly. Was it an easy project to pitch? "He liked the songs and was happy to record them as well as play on most of them, too! The album was recorded over a fairly long time and I'd like one day to have written enough to make a second release."

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Vinyl LP Reviews

★★★★★ EXCELLENT
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ AVERAGE
★★ PATCHY
★ POOR

The King Of Rockabilly at Columbia, Charlie Feathers is reissued, Boz Boorer heads back to the future, a one-woman hurricane and some razor-sharp rockin'

REVIEWS BY **CRAIG BRACKENRIDGE**

the Blue Cats
EXPLORERS OF THE BEAT
Demos & Sessions 1981-1983

The Blue Cats

EXPLORERS OF THE BEAT

BLUELIGHT

★★★★

There's real treasure among these 10 previously unreleased archive tracks captured between 1981-1983. The first ever recording of *Wild Night* is here and *Slap That Bass*, *You Gotta Be Loose* and *Southbound Blues* from the same BBC radio session are also included. Most interesting are the versions of *Captain Blood* and *The Poacher* in their earliest incarnations. Both eventually appeared on the Beltane Fire album, *Different Breed*, but they are presented here in a rawer form. A fascinating peek into how the band's sound developed over time.

BOZ BOORER
BACK TO NEO
Sleazy

Boz Boorer

BACK TO NEO

SLEAZY

★★★½

Although this 10" vinyl only offers eight tracks, it's a rich banquet that drafts in quality talent, including the rest of The Polecats. Two songs feature Boorer tackling all roles single-handedly, including a rollicking Ted revival-style take on The Vibes' *Pretty Baby* from 1958. Originals such as the haunting *Last Man Left Alive*, a sparky Ronnie Dawson tribute *Waxahachie Warrior* and the psychobilly-flavoured *Séance For Lux* illustrate the real variety on offer. A raucous cover of *Cool Daddy In A Cadillac* ensures that this project is essential listening.

Carl Perkins

THE COMPLETE COLUMBIA SINGLES VOL. 1 & VOL. 2

SLEAZY

★★★★

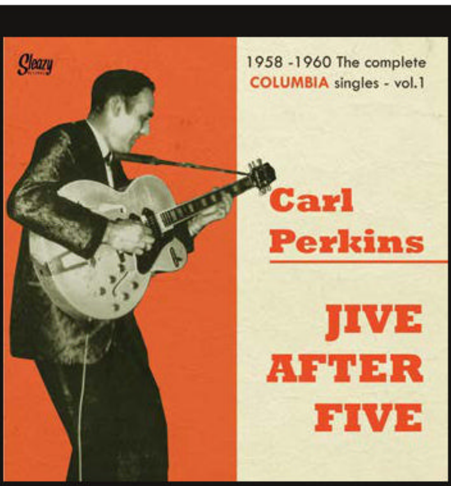
Spanning his occasionally maligned career at Columbia Records, this collection presents the 11 singles that Carl Perkins recorded for the label between 1958 and 1962 in their entirety.

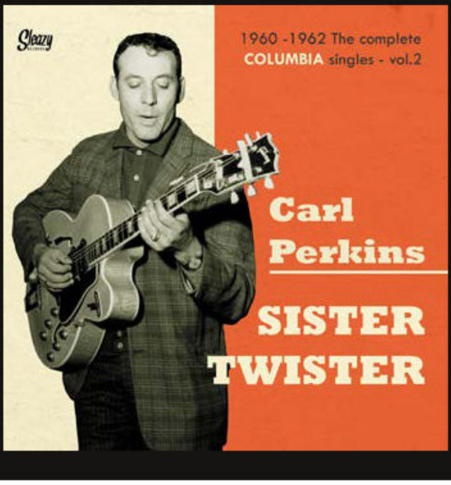
The opening volume, *Jive After Five*, presents the artist's first recordings for the esteemed label between 1958 to 1960 and while some suggested Perkins perhaps struggled with large studio set-ups after his time at Sun, solid rockers such as the title track, *Pink Pedal Pushers* as well as *Pointed Toe Shoes* would suggest otherwise.

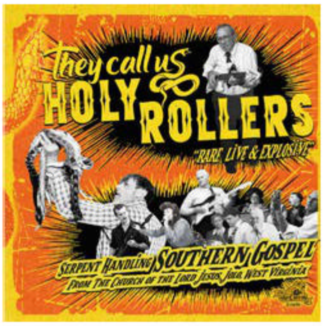
There are some signs of major label interference, as *Y-O-U* sounds as if Perkins was being prodded in a more mainstream direction, but other ballads such as *I Don't See Me In Your Eyes Anymore* and *One Ticket To Loneliness* sound more earthy and honest. In a nice touch of continuity, final track *Honey, Cause I Love You* stands alone, with its B-side *Just For You* appearing over on volume two where things take a rather more countrified direction.

Sister Twister starts where the first album left off and continues to 1962 where Carl's contract with Columbia ended and he was unceremoniously shown the door. The influence of Nashville is far greater on these recordings and *L-O-V-E-V-I-L-L-E*, *Hollywood City* and *Sister Twister* all swing wildly with a highly-polished big band sound. *Hambone* keeps things down and dirty and, despite songs like *I've Just Got Back From There* slowing things down, generally this second LP is the most lively because of – or perhaps despite – its glossy production.

This pair of Carl Perkins LPs are a perfect example of how archive recordings can be carefully curated and paired with thoughtful sleeve design to create something new and essential.






They call us
HOLY ROLLERS
"RARE, LIVE & EXPLOSIVE"
SERPENT HANDLING SOUTHERN GOSPEL
FROM THE CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS, JOLO, WEST VIRGINIA

Various Artists

THEY CALL US HOLY ROLLERS

IDLE CHERUB

★★★★½

These recordings of the gospel sermons held by The Church of the Lord Jesus in Jolo, West Virginia, have lain dormant for over 25 years, but like Lazarus they have risen, courtesy of Idle Cherub. Quite simply, this is a collection of genuinely wild rockabilly workouts complete with whoopin', hollerin' and hellfire-preaching. A well-presented gatefold with sleevenotes and photos of this 'unique' congregation, this is both stirring and weirdly hypnotic. Overall, a fascinating anthropological study that deserves to be in the Smithsonian Music Archive.

CHARLIE FEATHERS
Why don't you... get with it?

Charlie Feathers

WHY DON'T YOU... GET WITH IT?

EL TORO

★★★★

Charlie Feathers' back catalogue gets the luxury reissue treatment here with 32 tracks presented on two coloured vinyl LPs. El Toro dig mostly through the Sun, King, Meteor and Kay archives as they explore not only Feathers' solo output but also some of the session work he did for Jody Chastain, Charlie Morgan and the Miller Sisters. The majority of the material dates from 1955-58 but his 1961 single for Memphis featuring *Today And Tomorrow/Wild Wild Party* also appears. Demos and alternate takes are also included. A fine tribute to a rockin' icon.

Basement Boppers
WET OUR WHISTLES

Basement Boppers

WET OUR WHISTLES

AYCB

★★★

This relatively new three-piece from Bologna are purveyors of a sassy, soulful brand of rockin' that drifts somewhere between rockabilly, garage punk and R&B in a fairly relaxed manner. It takes until third track, *Stop Ruining Our Party*, before things get going but that's no bad thing – these cats are laid back. *We're Rockin' At Midnight* is a chunk of slow-burning blues, *Why Don't You Just Leave Her Alone* moves into doo-wop territory and there's an unexpected reggae workout on *Basement Times*. A mixed bag but no shortage of variety on offer.

RELAXTRIO
Payback Time

RelaxTrio

PAYBACK TIME

JUNGLE

★★★★

This young Finnish band have matured with each album and on this fourth outing they've created something special. Reminiscent of the more mainstream psychobilly combos such as The Creepshow and Horrorpops, RelaxTrio retain that double-bass, guitar and drums line-up but take this format into new territories. Fist-pumping stompers are plentiful with *So Bad* and *Secret* leading the way but *Freakshow* and *Closed Locked Doors* showcase a band unafraid to experiment. This may be a step too far for some, but for intrepid rockers it's a treat.

A TRIBUTE TO
Screaming Lord Sutch
DECAPITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT!

Various Artists

DECAPITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT!

WESTERN STAR

★★★

Paying tribute to the irreverent Screaming Lord Sutch, these six originals honour the inimitable 3rd Earl of Harrow in the most appropriate way. Such is the love for Sutch that both El Camino and The Dellatones are clamouring for the wild man to rise from the grave and save us from the zombies in control at Whitehall. The Bad Detectives and The Pat Winn Combo offer equally singalong salutes, while The Surfin' Wombatz psycho-belter *Monster Raving Loony* lurks menacingly alongside The Holloway Echoes ode to pirate radio, *Shivering Sands*.

The Hurricanes
ROAD TO RUIN

The Hurricanes

ROAD TO RUIN

MISSING FINK

★★★½

Only a couple of years into their career, high-octane Scottish rockers The Hurricanes unleash their second album, *Road To Ruin*. The band's 2021 debut, *Devil's Choice*, set the template for their tight, hard-edged rockabilly and this delivers more of the same whilst marking their first full-length offering on vinyl. Along with gems like *3 Days In Memphis* and *Rockabilly Sound*, there's mid-paced moments to add variety. John Hatton from the Brian Setzer Orchestra even pops up on a few tracks. Obviously no-one told this lot about 'second album syndrome'...

WARNING
FOR INSANE PEOPLE ONLY
THE INCREDIBLE WILD AND WEIRD WORLD OF THE ONE LADY BAND AND HER TRIP TO HELL AND BACK!
BANG BANG BAND GIRL
12 SUPER DUPER EXTRAORDINARY GIRL TROUBLE ROCK'N'ROLL TRACKS

Bang Bang Band Girl

12 SUPER DUPER EXTRAORDINARY GIRL TROUBLE ROCK'N'ROLL TRACKS

VOODOO RHYTHM

★★★

Kicking off with an album title such as this is something of a mission statement but Sheri Corleone exceeds expectations. A native of Chile, now based in Rotterdam, this one-woman tornado rattles through a dozen covers handling guitar, drums and vocal duties on her own with just a little assistance on sax and theremin. Elvis, The Cramps and Wanda Jackson are just some of the stars that get mauled with gleeful abandon. There's lighter moments, but this is trashy rock'n'roll for stout-hearted listeners.

THE HANGMEN
DEBAUCHERY IN THE MORTUARY
The Hangmen - Debauchery In The Mortuary.

The Hangmen

DEBAUCHERY IN THE MORTUARY

MORTUARY

★★★½

The Hangmen have been peddling their own angry brand of psychobilly since the early 90s and on this, their ninth full-length offering, they don't appear to have mellowed with age. Seething with a caustic rage, the album never descends into any form of muddy thrash and the 'billy part of their make-up remains thick, thudding and as sharp as a well-maintained guillotine. Most of the titles aren't suitable for polite society but rest assured, after this 13-track thumping you'll feel battered and bruised but ready to experience the whole thing all over again.

Singles & EP Reviews

★★★★★ EXCELLENT
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ AVERAGE
★★ PATCHY
★ POOR

Big beat classics and Teddy Boy rock'n'roll make a return to vinyl, plus Croatian frat-house garage, wave-riding instrumentals, some swingin' capers on wax, a rocking tribute to past heroes and a heavy dose of Spanish heat!

REVIEWS BY **CRAIG BRACKENRIDGE**

FURY RECORDS
FURY RECORDS LTD
THIS RECORD MUST BE PLAYED AT
45 R.P.M

Furious

WE ARE THE TEDS

FURY

★★★½

Fury Records' singles club continues as they grab another two whoppers from the history of British rock'n'roll and whack them out on a chunk of clear blue vinyl. Liverpool rowdies Furious kick things off (literally) with their house-wreckin' *We Are The Teds*. It's hard to believe this was first released back in 2010 as its power has not faded – it remains a fist-shaking rocker of the highest order. On the B-side, we return to 1979 and Orpington Edwardians Vernon & The G.I.'s present the equally anthemic *I'm A Teddy Boy* to finish things off nicely.

デイドリーム
THE FABULOUS COURETTES
モノラル

The Courettes

DAYDREAM

DAMAGED GOODS

★★★

There's been no shortage of vinyl from this duo of garage rockers but like gourmet food or a free bar, there's always room for a bit more. Keeping the international flavour of their 2022 single *Bye Bye Mon Amour*, this time they opt for a Japanese version of their Spector-esque ballad, *Daydream*, backed up on a white vinyl 7" with the original track. It's a widescreen sound that shimmers in both languages and, while it appeared on a Japanese label last year, the chances of getting a grip on that are slim, so bring this into your life asap.

Charlie Feathers

ALTERNATIVELY

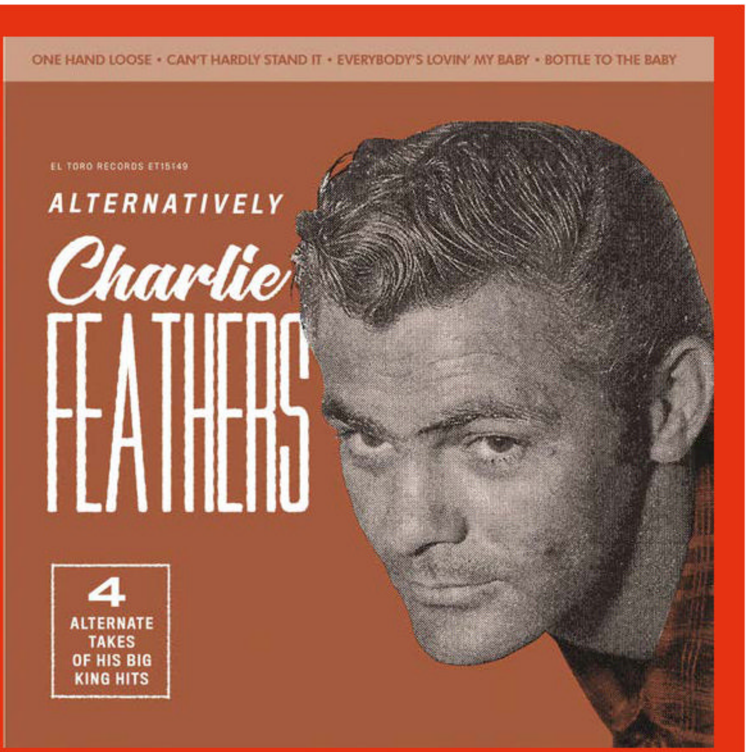
EL TORO

★★★★

In their *Alternatively* series, El Toro have already released coloured vinyl EPs featuring alternate cuts from Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Warren Smith and more, but now Charlie Feathers is in focus and presented on a 7" single in a disturbing shade of brown.

All four tracks are from the second half of 1956 and lifted from the vaults of King Records. The original versions of the material collected here appeared on two of Feathers' 45s for the Ohio label and were credited as 'With Jody and Jerry' (Joe Dan Chastain & Jerry Huffman). In terms of structure, there's very little difference on this version of *One Hand Loose* but it does sound slightly sharper than the original, which may be just down to modern remastering techniques. On *Can't Hardly Stand It*, the vocals seem to have very slight reductions in Charlie's lonesome yelps but the ominous guitar twang still echoes wildly. *Everybody's Lovin' My Baby* and *Bottle To The Baby* prop up the second side of this disc and both, once again, seem a little bolder than the originals in terms of audio quality.

Depending on how bionic your hearing is, these new cuts may not make a lot of difference but what can't be ignored is that this is a great quartet of classic Feathers' tracks that are equally as lively as the originals and available on a fresh slice of vinyl for your listening pleasure. How you feel about the value of having different versions of your favourite songs is obviously a matter of personal taste but the fact remains this is rock'n'roll archaeology at work. This series of EPs lets long-forgotten archive tracks live again on wax and that fact alone is surely all the recommendation you need.


ONE HAND LOOSE • CAN'T HARDLY STAND IT • EVERYBODY'S LOVIN' MY BABY • BOTTLE TO THE BABY
EL TORO RECORDS ET15149
ALTERNATIVELY
Charlie FEATHERS
4 ALTERNATE TAKES OF HIS BIG KING HITS

ICHI-BONS
4 BIG HITS!
EXTENDED PLAY
MAMO
PADDY
HIDEKY
ICH-I-BON #1
45 R.P.M.
MONO

Ichi-Bons

ICH-I-BON #1

HI-TIDE

★★★

The term 'primitive rock'n'roll' is often overused but Toronto-based trio Ichi-Bons can't be described as anything else – and this EP captures their wildness across four instrumentals. The title track delves into frantic surf rock, then *Switchblade* takes things in a surprisingly western-flavoured direction. *The Rockin' Gypsy* sounds as you would expect, with hints of flamenco behind solid rock'n'roll guitar while *Don't Call Me Flyface* brings things to a rowdy close. Plenty of variety and definitely a band worth looking out for.

ANNA DUKKE
CR A 3317
BROKEN CHAINS
folc

Anna Dukke

BROKEN CHAINS

FOLC

★★★

Powerful Spanish vocalist Anna Dukke peddles a strikingly honest brand of rockin' blues and this four-track EP will undoubtedly bring her to a wider audience. Augmented by a solid rockabilly backing band plus additional brass and keys, Dukke shines brightly and Al Dual joins the fun on his acoustic guitar while in the producer's chair. Along with the obligatory ballad, *See You Again*, the swaggering *If It's News To You* and *Comfortable Crap* alongside the flat-out rocker *Good Mind* all combine to showcase a vibrant new talent.

FRANKIE AND THE POOLBOYS
The Stargazers

Frankie And The Pool Boys

THE STARGAZERS

HI-TIDE

★★

This portion of surf instrumentals carries an unusual whiff of 80s indie about it, which sets it slightly apart from the usual barrage of echo-drenched epics the genre often offers up. *The Stargazers* has a touch of exotica and, over on the flipside, *Breathing Your Air* even dips into shoegaze territory with its Farfisa organ overtones. While much of the band's back catalogue features more traditional wave-catching twangers this seems to be a different direction – or a quick detour into new dimensions. Either way, it breaks new ground on the beachfront.

DON'T MISS THE
MONKEY TRAIN
Sleazy
Sleazy
MONKEY TRAIN
THE KAISERS

The Kaisers

MONKEY TRAIN

SLEAZY

★★★★

Scotland's 'Lairds of Beat' recorded this in Spain and the temperate climate seems to have fuelled their hot R&B tendencies. Many attempt to capture that tight-trousered abandon of early-60s British bands but The Kaisers continue to lead the way and *Monkey Train* is another catchy toe-tapper designed to stimulate primitive screams. While Marty Robbins' *Sugaree* has been covered liberally, over on the B-side these bierkeller dwellers deliver their own swingin' version. This is a two-track teaser to keep you entertained until the new LP lands.

B CONFIDENTIAL & THE SECRET 4

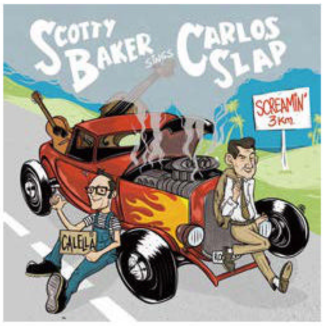
B Confidential & The Secret 4

DOWN THE SUBWAY

MARTIN'S GARAGE

★★½

Croatian five-piece B Confidential & The Secret 4 offer a blend of frat-house garage and R&B on this single as they deliver their own take on a fairly obscure pair of covers: Jack Hammer's *Down The Subway* and The Pirates' (no, not *those* Pirates) *Cuttin' Out*. The end result is original enough to keep you entertained and reminiscent of the likes of Trini Lopez and Billy Lee Riley in their wilder moments with a touch of Mose Allison on the side. A tasty mix of the type of rock'n'soul that appears to be in short supply.


SCOTTY BAKER SINGS CARLOS SLAP
SCREAMIN' 3Km
CALELLA

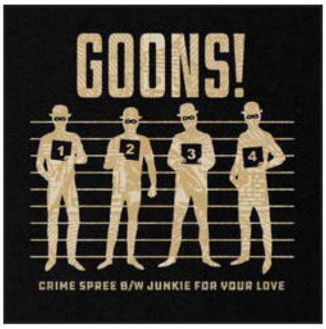
Scotty Baker Sings Carlos Slap

SCREAMIN' BOP

EL TORO

★★★½

This latest in the *Sings Carlos Slap* series teams up Aussie rockabilly singer Scotty Baker with Spanish bass-man Carlos Slap on two tracks that celebrate a pair of Spain's rock'n'roll hotspots. Calella's Screamin' festival is in focus first on *Screamin' Bop*, a stroller that makes the most of Baker's baritone with twanging riffs from Daniel Álvarez. The B-side, *Santi's*, is a jazzier affair as it toasts the legendary beach bar in Pineda De Mar with blasts of accordion and Scotty's vocals tipping into torch singer territory.


GOONS!
1
2
3
4
CRIME SPREE B/W JUNKIE FOR YOUR LOVE

Goons!

CRIME SPREE

HI-TIDE

★★★½

Finally on vinyl, *Crime Spree* has all the trademarks of the finest vintage TV themes including a drum-bashing intro, instantly catchy chorus and punchy running time. If The Trashmen and Ramones got together to cover the intro song from *The Banana Splits* then it would probably sound something like this. B-side *Junkie For Your Love* adopts a more swingin' go-go bar grind that delivers the goods then makes itself scarce well before the three-minute mark. Like all the best 45s, this hits swift and hard and demands a replay immediately.

A TRIBUTE TO DON CRAINE
mono
THEE HEADCOATS
SECT

Thee Headcoats Sect

A TRIBUTE TO DON CRAINE

DAMAGED GOODS

★★★

Back after 23 years, this combination of Thee Headcoats and Downliners Sect reunite to pay tribute to the sad passing of the Sect's Don Craine. Remaining Downliner Keith Evans joins forces with Medway legends Billy Childish, Bruce Brand and Johnny Johnson to power through four new recordings. The big beat is enormous on *The Baker Street Irregulars*, and *Oh Leader, We Do Dig Thee* and *One Ugly Child* tap into a raucous rhythm and blues racket. Only *The Ballad Of Malcolm Laphroaig (Alt Version)* eases up as it dips into folk-horror territory. Spooky!

CD Album Reviews

★★★★★ EXCELLENT
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ AVERAGE
★★ PATCHY
★ POOR

Deep dives into boxsets for the King, Del Shannon and psych mod, plus a fitting epitaph to the much-missed Robert Gordon...

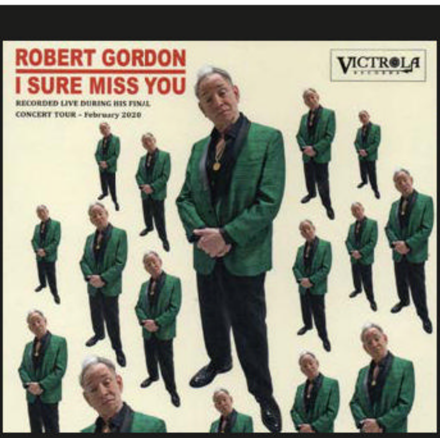
REVIEWS BY **STEVE HARNELL & CRAIG BRACKENRIDGE**

Robert Gordon

I SURE MISS YOU

VICTROLA RECORDS

★★★★



Released four months after last year's posthumous studio album, *Hellafied*, this live record was captured during the much-missed Robert Gordon's final tour in February 2020 shortly before concerts were put on hold by the pandemic.

It's a fine epitaph, too, with Gordon in good spirits and on strong vocal form throughout, ably assisted by a backing band that features Darrel Higham. Gordon informs the crowd that it's only his fourth outing with the band, but you'd never know – the musicianship is tight and they really do this solid 22-song setlist justice. Gordon mines his own back catalogue well, and there's a smattering of superb covers to broaden out its reach. With album artwork that doffs its cap to the *50,000,000 Elvis Fans Can't Be Wrong* sleeve, there are a couple more nods to the King here – a decent take on *Suspicion* and the lesser-known *Little Sister*. Even when paying tribute to his heroes, Gordon is very much his own man, though. A seasoned live performer, there's an easy-going authority to his stage presence – he's clearly having a ball here.

Driving opener, *Someday, Somehow* kicks the show off on the front foot before Gordon returns to more straight-ahead rockabilly territory with Higham throwing down a wonderful fleet-fingered solo – the guitarist is on superb form throughout the show and often elevates the material. Meanwhile, Higham turns up the reverb for a wonderful revisit of *The Way I Walk*, a highlight of Gordon's collaboration with the legendary Link Wray on 1978 album, *Fresh Fish Special*. It's followed by another former Wray hook-up on that LP, the country bounce of *Red Cadillac And A Black Moustache*. A muscular take on Johnny Horton's *I'm Coming Home* also finds Higham serving up a dazzling solo.

Gordon thinks outside the box on a handful of occasions in terms of song choices: it's nice to see The Yardbirds' *Heart Full Of Soul* making the cut as well as Cliff's *Move It*, a nod perhaps from Gordon towards his European audience here. It's far from wilfully esoteric, though, with expected classics such as *Rock Billy Boogie* and Gene Vincent's *I Sure Miss You*, that's become this live LP's title cut.

A lo-fi bonus track recording of Gordon singing James Brown's *Try Me* way back in 1962 provides a poignant sting in the tale and evidence that his career stretched back much further than the 70s neo-rockabilly revival that brought him fame. **Steve Harnell**

WHAT A PARTY
Bobby Charles
THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS FROM 1955 - 1966

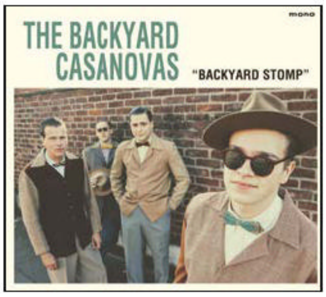
Bobby Charles

WHAT A PARTY: THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS FROM 1955-1966

BEAR FAMILY RECORDS

★★★½

An alumni of *The Last Waltz*, The Band always considered Bobby Charles to be one of the great unheralded songwriters of rock'n'roll. This 65-track compilation rounds up his complete output across an 11-year period for labels including Chess, Jewel, Paula and Hub City. You'll know the deathless *See You Later Alligator*, of course, but that just skims the surface. Apart from the rockers, the likes of *On Bended Knee* also prove that his talent as an emotive balladeer shouldn't be overlooked. **SH**



The Backyard Casanovas

BACKYARD STOMP

RHYTHM BOMB

★★★

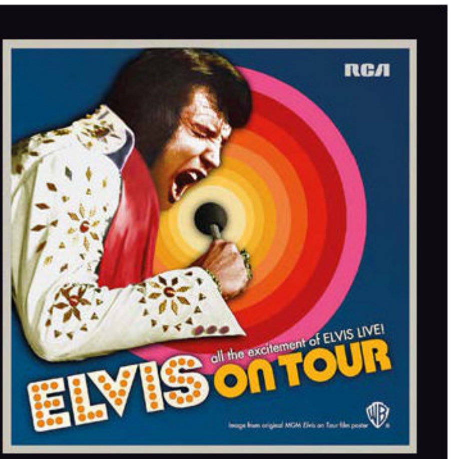
Breaking away from their role as Cat Lee King's backing band, this German quartet release their own debut with *Backyard Stomp* serving up a dozen vintage-sounding slabs of jump blues. The guitar and vocals in particular have that warm feel on the very edge of distortion that gives the whole album a decidedly authentic late-40's sound. Moods shift from the insolent *You Don't Give A Damn* to the frenetic *Geronimo Rock'n'Roll* and, while the pace changes liberally from track to track, it ultimately results in a highly entertaining package. **Craig Brackenridge**

Elvis Presley

ELVIS ON TOUR

RCA/LEGACY RECORDINGS

★★★★



Slightly delayed from its original release date that tied in with the 50th anniversary of the King's 1972 jaunt across the States, this expansive boxset has been worth the wait.

Comprising 145 tracks – 91 of which are previously unreleased – it's a fine showcase for Elvis at his 70s peak as a live performer. His 18 April 1972 show in San Antonio, Texas, will already be familiar to fans but three discs of material, from Virginia shows in Hampton and Richmond plus a North Carolina concert, are released officially for the first time.

We've said it before multiple times in the pages of *Vintage Rock* but it still bears repeating, Elvis' live band during the 70s were pretty much untouchable. The best of the best, they're on consistently stellar form on each of the discs here. As you'd expect, there is duplication of material across the various shows and any differences in performances usually come down to how engaged Presley was with the songs on any given night. He's pretty much on the money here, though, and the odd lyrical word change for his own amusement aside, plays it straight throughout.

Setting the tone with the bombastic *Also Sprach Zarathrustra*, it's matched by a galloping, horn-infused *See See Rider* with stunning soloing from James Burton and the gut-wrenching *You Gave Me A Mountain*. Elsewhere, regular set highlight *Polk Salad Annie* is dependably terrific, and in these shows it's particularly funky. Presley also returns to his early years for a rollicking *All Shook Up* and *(Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear*. Only the rather dated *Are You Lonesome Tonight?* feels out of place in this era. Much better is a reinvented *Hound Dog* with Burton's wah-wah guitar approach nodding at the blaxploitation soundtracks of the times.

Presley performed *Bridge Over Troubled Water* better than the selections included here, likewise for *Suspicious Minds*, although both are dispatched in style. Final setlist flourishes with gospel tunes *How Great Thou Art* and *Sweet, Sweet Spirit* puts Presley's soulful backing vocalists as much as the King himself in the spotlight and reassert his roots in religious music aside from the pomp and ceremony of his full throttle rock'n'roll show.

The two discs of rehearsals culled from preparatory work at RCA Studios the month before these concerts are less essential. Not intended for official release, there's a noticeable hiss on the audio. It's a moot point, too, whether anyone really needs to hear 10 versions of Elvis and band chipping away at *For The Good Times*.

Completing the package is a blu-ray of the original Golden Globe-winning concert movie. A comprehensive boxset that captures prime Presley with a cookin' band. **SH**

The CADILLAC KINGS
CRASH AND BURN

The Cadillac Kings

CRASH AND BURN

33 RECORDS

★★★½

Mike Thomas and his assembled blues heroes return for album six. It's a solid collection of blues rockers that'll get you on your feet rather than wallowing in the pits of despair. *Betty Lou Just Broke Outa Jail* rattles along on a Chuck Berry groove and Tim Penn's piano accordion really makes *Cadillac Boogie* and *Farmer John* shine. The tongue-in-cheek lyrics to *It Ain't Smart* and the perils of online shopping raised on *Too Much Stuff* will raise a smile, while *Havana Mama* shimmers gracefully like Creedence Clearwater Revival in particularly laid-back mode. **SH**

Del Shannon

STRANGER IN TOWN: A DEL SHANNON COMPENDIUM

EDSEL/DEMON

★★★★½

A 302-track 12CD boxset, this quite simply is the Del Shannon motherlode. An extraordinary deep dive into the singer-songwriter's complete career, *Stranger In Town* presents his studio albums plus a selection of intriguing demos and eight previously unreleased songs.

As with Edsel's recent 61-track *Handy Man* compilation, you'll come away from *Stranger In Town* with an appreciation of what a wide-ranging artist Shannon was. His initial quartet of rock'n'roll albums from 1961-64 (*Runaway...*, *Hats Off...*, *Little Town Flirt* and *Handy Man*) are all fine shop windows for his talents but by 1965 he'd already set his sights on wider horizons. That year's *Del Shannon Sings Hank Williams* shows a clear affinity with country music, while his collaboration with Rolling Stones producer Andrew Loog Oldham for the previously overlooked *Home And Away* studio LP proves just how unlucky Shannon was commercially. Likewise, *The Further Adventures Of Charles Westover*, a record that's particularly good at highlighting his expressive vocals, should have been a smash.

Released posthumously, his *Rock On!* album was a final flourish. Co-produced by Jeff Lynne and featuring Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers, you'll hear their fingerprints all over this classy slice of AOR. Shannon's personality still shines through, though, and he supplied the majority of the self-penned material.

Completists will appreciate full versions of *The Nashville Sessions* and a 33-track rarities and demos disc that even includes the quirky addition of a handful of Pepsi commercials – Shannon was certainly adaptable. Also boasting a 32-page booklet featuring sleevenotes by Alan Robinson plus photos and various Del-related ephemera, fans really can't ask for more material in one place than this impressively thorough compendium. **SH**

STRANGER IN TOWN
DEL SHANNON Compendium

Various Artists

EDDIE PILLER PRESENTS: BRITISH MOD SOUNDS VOLUME 2 – THE FREAKBEAT & PSYCH YEARS

DEMON/EDSEL

★★★★⯨

EDDIE PILLER PRESENTS
BRITISH MOD SOUNDS VOLUME 2
FREAKBEAT & PSYCH YEARS
BRITISH MOD SOUNDS VOLUME 2
THE FREAKBEAT & PSYCH YEARS
1
2
3
4

The follow-up to 2022's superb *Eddie Piller Presents British Mod Sounds Of The 1960s* – one of *VR*'s favourite boxsets of the year – comes this second volume that takes us into the stratosphere.

Acid Jazz label founder Piller has dubbed this "What mod did next" and this *Freakbeat & Psych Years* selection explores how the scene splintered into multiple musical directions. While some acts hardened their sonic approach during the Swinging London era and morphed into freakbeat outfits, others drew from Eastern and psychedelic influences.

Across four CDs and 95 tracks – the compilation is also available as a 6LP 91-song set on purple vinyl as well as a stripped-back 31-track 2LP set – Piller takes a similar approach to the first volume. Big-hitters such as The Who, Yardbirds, Small Faces, Scott Walker and Fleetwood Mac are included to tempt those on the fence but the real gems here are the under-the-radar offerings that may have escaped most people's attention first time around. Piller's curation is once more impeccable, giving a taste of all manner of intriguing acts that warrant further investigation across their back catalogue.

The rocked-up electrified flamenco flourishes and bass runs of The New Breed's *Unto Us* owe a debt to Messrs Townshend and Entwistle but much of the tracklisting here is innovative and forward-thinking.

The head-spinning guitar tone of The Riot Squad's *I Take It That We're Through* is a joy while the rather lovely *My World Fell Down* by The Ivy League wouldn't be out of place on The Zombies' seminal *Odessey And Oracle*.

Tough sounds are interspersed thoughtfully on the tracklisting with their woozier counterparts: the thundering *Mud In Your Eye* by Fleur De Lys, tight R&B groove of *Hey Gyp (Dig The Slowness)* by The Truth, and The Flies' dirgy cover of The Monkees' *(I'm Not Your) Steppin' Stone* work particularly well as counterpoints to their wilder contemporaries. There's innocent curios, too, courtesy of Jan Panter's *Scratch My Back* and Mark Wirtz's *(Here's Our Dear Old) Weatherman* plus the always delightful Peter Wyndgarde with *Neville Thumbcatch*. Early Bowie oddity *The Gospel According To Tony Day* may also come as a surprise to those who aren't familiar with his early deep cuts.

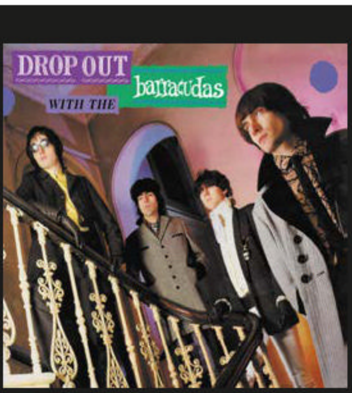
Another sparkling compilation from Piller, the only question remains following this selection of out-there gems – where does he go from here? **SH**

The Barracudas

DROP OUT WITH THE BARRACUDAS

CHERRY RED

★★★⯨



The Barracudas get the luxury reissue treatment here in a thorough 3CD boxset that's positively overflowing with tasty nuggets – 75 tracks are included and 21 of those are previously unreleased, prised from the personal archive of the band's songwriter and guitarist Robin Wills.

Featuring material from 1978-1981, there's even a snippet from 1977 when the band were known as RAF. The main focus of this release is their more garage punk and psych-fuelled 1981 album, *Drop Out With The Barracudas*, but there's also plenty of the earlier, more surf-focused material that introduced them to the world. This includes their debut 7" single *I Want My Woody Back*/*Subway Surfin'* as well as alternate versions of *Summer Fun* and *His Last Summer.*

The extra content is illuminating and, along with a wealth of demo tracks, there are also some rehearsal recordings and a few live cuts – all accompanied with a fairly hefty booklet.

Cherry Red have managed to get the most out of some occasionally limited source material here. Overall, this is an excellent snapshot of the band's early years. **CB**

ROCK IS HERE TO STAY • COSH BOYS
stereo
Cosh Boys
ROCK IS HERE TO STAY

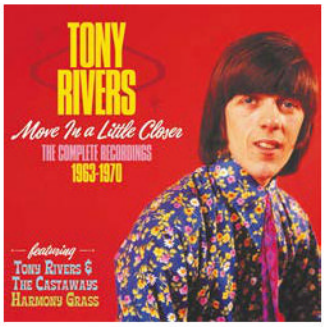
Cosh Boys

ROCK IS HERE TO STAY

REBEL MUSIC REC

★★⯨

Heading into their 20th year, these Finnish rockers keep it authentic on their latest 12-song affair. From the simple thrills of the title track to two standout instrumentals, the 50s twang of the short-but-sweet surf tune *Lonely Cherokee* is among the highlights as well as the driving *Canyon Ride*. In addition to their self-penned material, they also throw in a rough-and-ready take on Sam Cooke's propulsive *Shake*, plus there's a spin through Gene Vincent's seminal *Be-Bop-A-Lula* among the half-dozen bonus tracks on this CD version. **SH**


TONY RIVERS
Move In a Little Closer
THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS 1963-1970
featuring
Tony Rivers & The Castaways
Harmony Grass

Tony Rivers

MOVE A LITTLE CLOSER: THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS 1963-1970

CHERRY RED

★★★★

It's rare to find any artist whose catalogue has not been extensively plundered, but Tony Rivers' material is relatively sparse making this 88-track boxset worth investigating. With the complete recordings of Tony Rivers & The Castaways and Harmony Grass from 1963-70, this collection documents Rivers' ever-changing moods through British R&B, freakbeat, psychedelia and sunshine pop. Drifting from raucous to dreamy, this welcome overview also includes extensive sleevenotes and BBC sessions. **CB**

WIN TICKETS TO THAT'LL BE THE DAY

That'll Be The Day!
PRIZE FUND WORTH £300

Following the huge success of its 35th Anniversary Tour, *That'll Be The Day* is back on the road with another incredible show packed full of world-class performances from Trevor Payne and the highly talented cast.

Unashamedly nostalgic, the production takes the audience on a rollercoaster ride through music history from the beginnings of 50s rock'n'roll, via the Swinging 60s and on to the glam rock of the 70s – and into the 80s.

The ultimate feelgood live experience, *That'll Be The Day*'s brilliant cast of musicians and singers recreate authentic, original sounds combined with hilarious comic sketches as well as superb audio visuals.

We have 10 pairs of tickets up for grabs for the Spring tour, which includes any of the shows running across the UK between April and July.

For more information on the production and to check out the full list of concert dates and venues, visit the show's official website at **thatllbetheday.com/tickets**

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Pat Capocci melds punk rock, blues and gypsy jazz into his rockabilly sound

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AS TOLD TO **DAVID WEST**

SOUNDTRACK Of My Life

Pat Capocci

Guitar heroes from across the musical spectrum inspire Australia's rockabilly hotshot

"I don't like putting barriers or rules on anything," says Pat Capocci, a purveyor of fiery rockabilly music, but someone whose style draws upon a deep well of influences from Texas and Chicago blues to gypsy jazz. Growing up in Maitland, a working-class mining town in New South Wales, Australia, Capocci loved skateboarding, surfing and punk rock. His father always had a guitar or two in the house, which proved handy when Pat found his calling in roots music.

When not onstage or in the studio, Capocci cuts hair at the Flying Tiger Barbershop in Freshwater, Sydney, keeping customers looking their sharpest. But the guitar remains his first love. "I still get up every day at 4.30am to practice," he says, "it's something that brings me lots of joy."

Brunswick
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ARE YOU FER IT—Fox-Trot
(Cole, Sigman)
THE KING COLE TRIO
Vocalists: Nat King Cole and Trio
BRUNSWICK LTD
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Are You Fer It?

THE KING COLE TRIO

1947

I've listened to the guitarist Oscar Moore so much over the years, although for a period it was like I completely forgot about him. His guitar playing is so killer and out-there. I always use this track as a pump-up before I play a gig, then there's a Stooges song that I play side-by-side with it. It's the energy and subtle dynamics with those guys that gets me excited. I think about Oscar's playing being really refined and almost intellectual, but there is also this playful nature, much like Django Reinhardt.

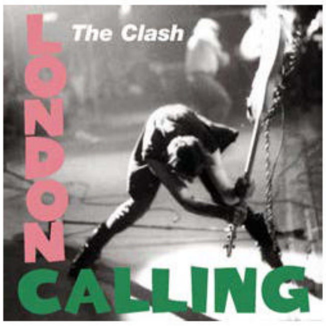
Flip
RECORDS INC.
Hi-Lo Music
BMI F-18
Country Vocal
MOVIE MAGG
(Perkins)
CARL PERKINS
501

Movie Magg

CARL PERKINS

1955

I finished school when I was 16. My folks took me to Newcastle in New South Wales. I did all these job interviews, and didn't like any of it, but the highlight was going to this second-hand record store and they had a Carl Perkins Sun Sessions CD there. It had all the A and B takes, things that were real and authentic. With *Movie Magg*, it chugs along really relaxed but there's an energy to it. It was a real takeaway, not only for the song but for that period of life, stepping into the working world and not knowing what was going on.

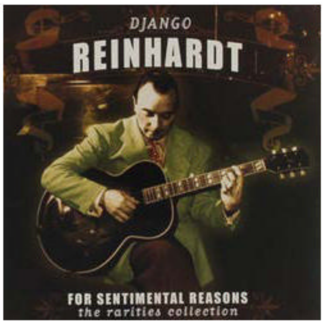

The Clash
LONDON CALLING

Lost In The Supermarket

THE CLASH

1979

My all-time favourite band. It's not an obvious choice when you think about Clash songs, but I think it was the first one that I heard where they allowed themselves to be very vulnerable. Joe Strummer wrote it for Mick Jones to sing, knowing his buddy, his upbringing and the working-class situation that he came from. It was the first time I experienced thinking about songs from a vulnerable point of view. It feels very exposing. I try to bring that into my own songwriting, not just writing 'Ooh, baby.'


DJANGO
REINHARDT
FOR SENTIMENTAL REASONS
the rarities collection

For Sentimental Reasons

DJANGO REINHARDT

1947

This has become like a mantra every morning. I walk to work every day and I've always listened to some lecture, philosophical study or political analysis on the way there. For the last five minutes of the journey I put this on to shift my brain and get me into the zone of being in the barbershop. The first notes when Django is playing and the bass comes in, it's so subtle and dynamic. It's a quiet song, but that opening bass note just feels so tasteful. If you look at my Spotify, that comes up as the number one song every year.

11 GREAT SONGS
ATTENTION: UNITED STATES, MEXICO & CANADA
RECORDED MAY 1979
THE FABULOUS
THUNDERBIRDS
JIMMY VAUGHAN
KIM WILSON
'GIRLS GO WILD'
Mike Buck
KEITH FERGUSON

Wait On Time

THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS

1979

One of my first guitar teachers gave me the *Girls Go Wild* vinyl – I would have been 16 or 17 years old at the time. I remember my mum drove me home from my guitar lesson and I put it on this dodgy old plastic record player that my parents had. It changed everything for me. Mike Buck playing his Texas shuffle so in the pocket, badass Keith Ferguson on bass. Kim Wilson, too, of course. Over the years it's been one thing I've always gone back to. Jimmie Vaughan, his choice of notes is fantastic. One note can say so much.

EXPENSIVE SHIT
FELA
Ransome Kuti
& africa 70

Expensive Sh*t

FELA KUTI

1975

In my songs like *Coming In Hot* and *Hot Hot Heat*, the way that they are structured, I'm bringing them up to come down and creating wavy layers. You're not going to notice it like, 'Yeah, that's Fela's influence in that bad boy,' but I think and feel it. His lyrical content is important, too. It was the first time I heard someone address revolutionary lyrics about colonisation, Marxism, the workers' struggle and all that stuff. That threw me down a different route philosophically, politically and lyrically. That was a big influence.

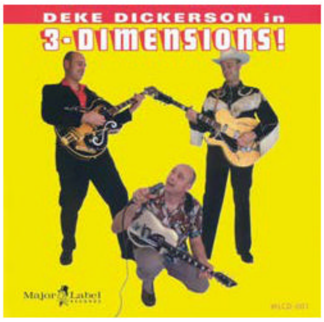
Cobra
RECORD CORP.
Armel Music BMI
C1015 Time 2:05
LOVE ME WITH A FEELING
(T. Maghett)
Magic Sam
5013

Love Me With A Feeling

MAGIC SAM

1957

Hearing the Chief and Cobra recordings by Magic Sam changed everything for me. This song, his phrasing on guitar, the lyrics, I've taken so much from it over the years. That had such an impact. It has this driving beat that was so primitive but refined, so subtle and dynamic, and the tremolo guitar sound he has which goes with all that Cobra stuff. I try to play with as much tremolo as I can nowadays, but you have to be careful because it's overpowering. You *can* have too much of a good thing.


DEKE DICKERSON in
3-DIMENSIONS!
Major Label

Pinball Boogie

DEKE DICKERSON

2003

Deke was a big influence; he was one of the first guys that we had access to in our town because there were no record stores that had anything vintage. He was on Hillsdale Records. Because it was a modern, almost indie alternative label, it was easy to get his stuff. Hearing that record and Earl Palmer's playing on the first few tunes – phew! The song really launched me down the Western route of hillbilly boogie, Western swing, and the stars that live around that world. Getting to play with him years later, it's still a spin-out.

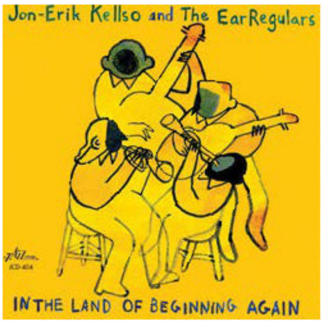
BROTHER JACK
JACK McDUFF
WITH BILL JENNINGS
PRESTIGE 7174

Noon Train

JACK McDUFF FEATURING BILL JENNINGS

1960

That song, the energy, wow! It's in the pocket the whole time from start to finish. Bill Jennings' solo is a constant study for me. Every few months I'll come back to it, I study that solo almost religiously. We played last night, I had on my notes, 'Okay, Bill, four minutes 50,' to remember the riff to play in a solo to try to add it to my own playing. I've listened to so much Bill Jennings over the years but hearing how he just constantly evolves as the song goes on, it gets more interesting.

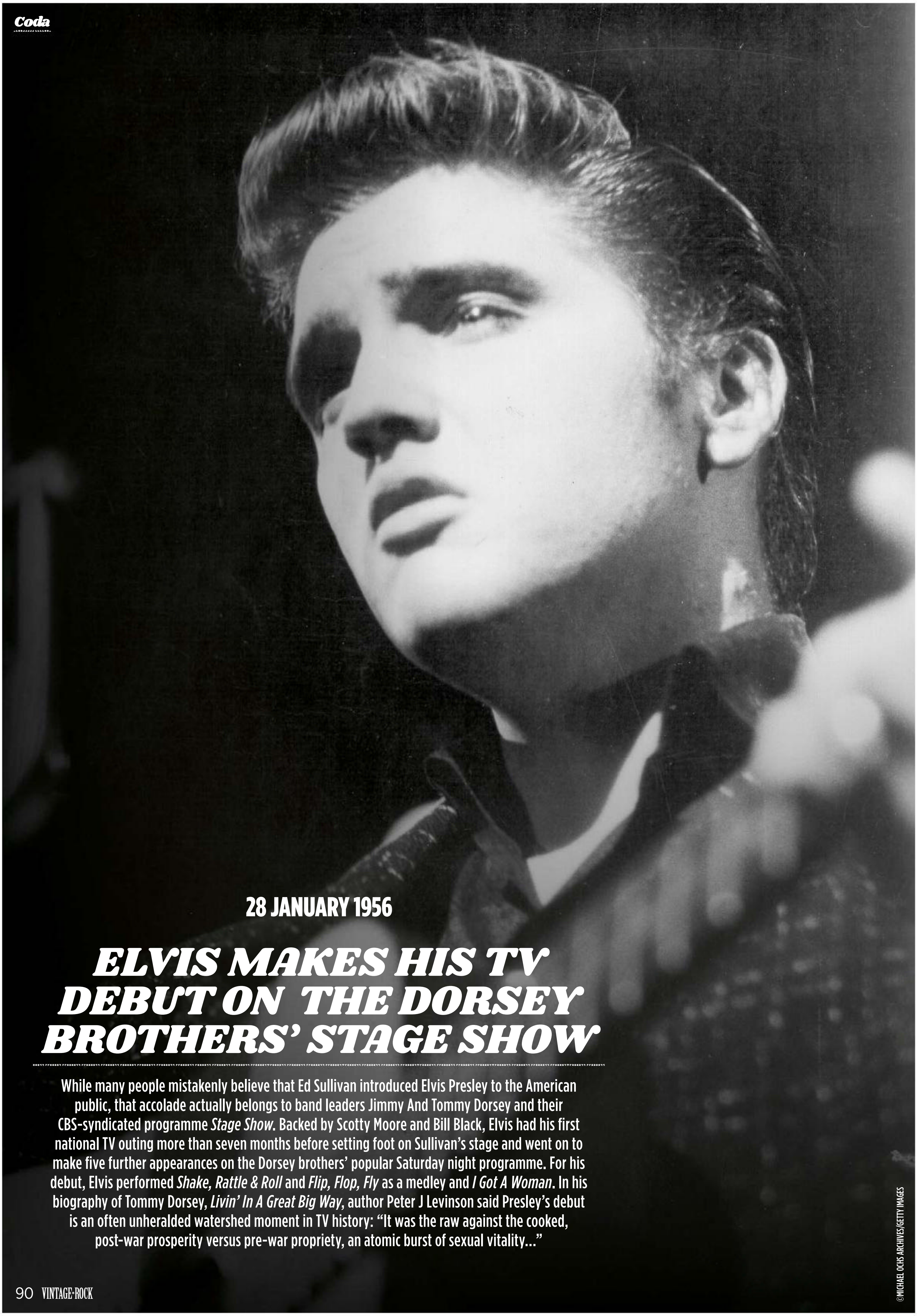

Jon-Erik Kellso and The EarRegulars
IN THE LAND OF BEGINNING AGAIN

S'posin

JON-ERIK KELLSO AND THE EARREGULARS FEATURING MATT MUNISTERI

2015

This has Matt Munisteri singing and on guitar. His guitar playing is the benchmark of where I'm trying to get to. It's such an intellectual and melodic place, it almost sounds like a conversation between good friends where the words are flowing and there are no abrupt finishes. And his vocal, it's relaxed and informal. You can hear his personality come out. I listened to the record again last night when I was driving home from the gig as a wind-down and it's a killer.



28 JANUARY 1956

ELVIS MAKES HIS TV DEBUT ON THE DORSEY BROTHERS' STAGE SHOW

While many people mistakenly believe that Ed Sullivan introduced Elvis Presley to the American public, that accolade actually belongs to band leaders Jimmy And Tommy Dorsey and their CBS-syndicated programme *Stage Show*. Backed by Scotty Moore and Bill Black, Elvis had his first national TV outing more than seven months before setting foot on Sullivan's stage and went on to make five further appearances on the Dorsey brothers' popular Saturday night programme. For his debut, Elvis performed *Shake, Rattle & Roll* and *Flip, Flop, Fly* as a medley and *I Got A Woman*. In his biography of Tommy Dorsey, *Livin' In A Great Big Way*, author Peter J Levinson said Presley's debut is an often unheralded watershed moment in TV history: "It was the raw against the cooked, post-war prosperity versus pre-war propriety, an atomic burst of sexual vitality..."

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LAS VEGAS HILTON

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ELVIS

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PRESENTS
ELVIS
OPENING NIGHT 1972

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